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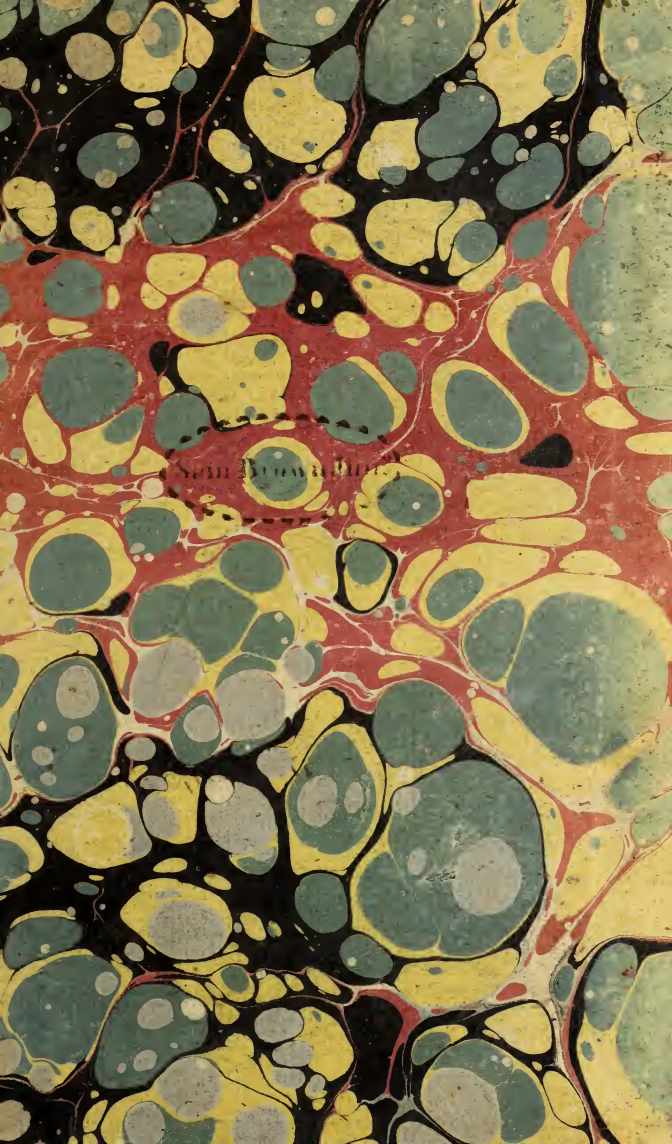
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POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. X.

10961

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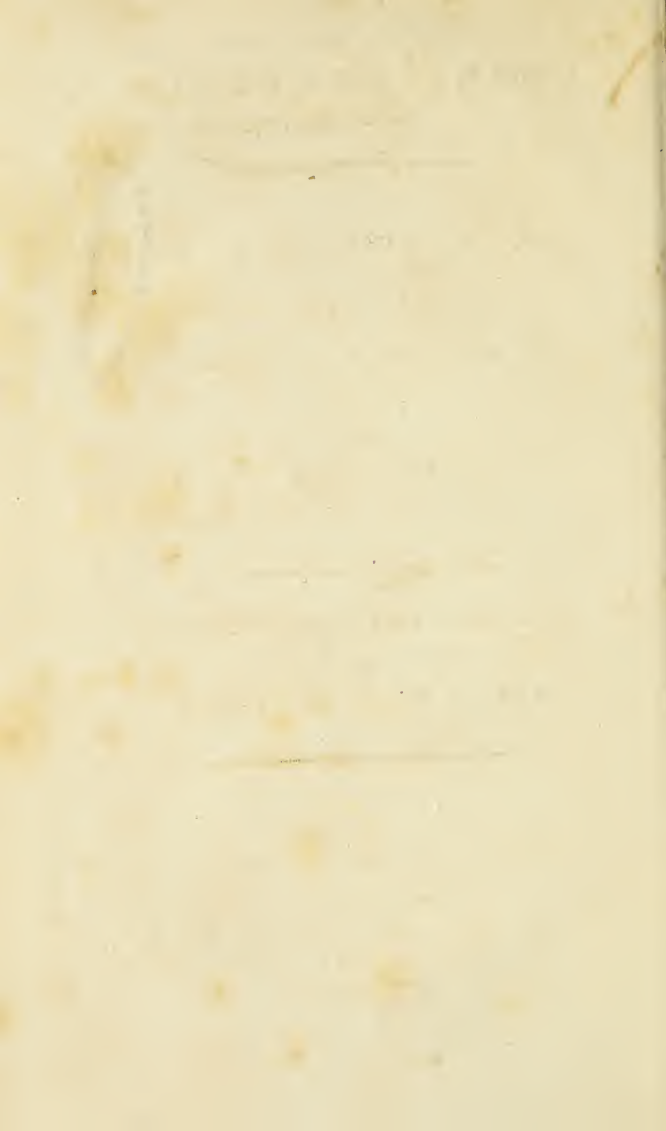
L E T T E R S
BETWEEN
F R E D E R I C H.
AND THE
M A R Q U I S D' A R G E N S.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
T H O M A S H O L C R O F T.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR
G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.







L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C H.

AND THE

M A R Q U I S D' A R G E N S.

1875

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L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

A N D T H E

M A R Q U I S D' A R G E N S.

L E T T E R I.

From the Marquis d'Argens.*

S I R E,

Liege, July 1, 1747.

I HAVE delayed writing to your majesty for two or three days, that I might give you a circumstantial account of every thing which has happened to me, from the moment I left the army to repair to Liege, and rejoin my travelling companion, thence to continue my route for Paris, through Bruffels.

* I have rather chosen to write the Marquis d'Argens than the Marquis of Argens, because the name written after the first manner is so well known. T.

Not receiving my passports at Wesel, after having waited five days for them, I set off for Aix la Chapelle, where I had scarcely arrived before they were brought me, by express, sent by the marshal von Doffow.

From Aix la Chapelle I went to Liege, with an escort of ten men, granted me by the Austrians; the escort came from the camp to meet me at Aix. On my arrival at Liege, I left Marianne there, and proceeded with an escort to the camp. I addressed myself on the very same day to M. de Puisieux, minister for foreign affairs, who treated me with great politeness, and so continued to treat me, while I remained with the army. On the morrow he presented me to the king, who received me very graciously. He began to laugh when he saw me, and said, in rather a loud tone, to M. de Puisieux—“How much he resembles his brother!”—He next made inquiry concerning the health of your majesty, asked when I left Berlin, &c.

The day that I was presented to the king I dined with marshal Saxe; on the morrow with the duc de Richelieu; on the next day with M. d'Argenson, minister for the war department; and yesterday with M. de Puisieux. To-day, the sixth after my arrival, I left the army
and

and have the honour to write to your majesty now from Liege.

The king commanded a passport to be given me, which he signed with his own hand ; and I have an order from the minister to have an escort as far as Brussels. Every possible justice has been promised me, relative to my affairs ; in fine, every thing is in good train, except the present, which I shall not receive till M. de Puisieux shall first have spoken to M. de Chambrier ; and it is likewise necessary, on this occasion, for your majesty to inform the latter what is your will. The following is the explanation of this enigma.

The good Valory, who cordially hates me, I know not why, has had the kindness to write that the present, which the king should make, must not be given to me, I being only the bearer of your majesty's letter *by accident*, but to the equerry who brought the horses. On this, when I departed, M. de Puisieux spoke to me with great frankness, and told me he was under much embarrassment ; that, on one side, he perceived, I being the bearer of your majesty's letter, your intention apparently was that the present should be given to me ; but that, on the other, he likewise perceived M. von Schwerin had brought the horses ; and that, being

thus in doubt, he should be glad of a word from M. de Chambrier. My reply to M. de Puisieux was that I esteemed myself so happy, in executing the commands of your majesty, that I did not trouble myself concerning the present in question; but that, as your majesty might imagine my not having received the present was because I had not been agreeable to the king, or had been guilty of some fault, I desired his permission for me simply to state to you what had passed between us. To this he replied I should give him pleasure, and relieve him from his perplexity, by so doing. Such is the state of the question, and the affair will be decided by the answer of M. de Chambrier. Let me entreat your majesty never to dispute with Valory on literary subjects, for I imagine he hates me because I have not been of his opinion.

I have seen the duc de Richelieu here, who told me he had been informed by ministers * that your majesty had been dissatisfied with him, when he was at Dresden; and added that he wrote a letter on this subject to the count von Rottemburg, charging the count to justify him to your majesty. I replied

* *Par la voie des ministres.* Ambassadors I imagine are meant. T.

I was absolutely ignorant of the affair, and that your majesty had never mentioned it to me.

The loss of the French, in the last battle, is more considerable than that of the allies ; they have been victorious, but victory has cost them two thousand more men than defeat has cost their enemies.

Löwendal is laying siege to Bergen-op-Zoom ; three-fourths of the officers in the army say he will not succeed ; and perhaps such is their wish, for they seldom have any affection for each other.

I hope your majesty will please to inform me, should there have been any thing in my conduct which may have given you offence. I take the liberty to send this letter by favour of your resident at Aix la Chapelle, from the fear that the one which I send in the common mode should be lost. The post-offices here are often confused, and ill regulated.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R I I.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Paris, August 15, 1747.

I ARRIVED at Paris three days ago, where I found a letter from M. d'Arget, in which he informed me that your majesty had done me the honour to write to me from Stettin. This letter I have been unfortunate enough not to receive; it apparently arrived at Wesel after my departure.

Leaving Liege, I a second time passed the French army; from thence I went to Bruffels, where I found M. de Chambrier about to quit the place. He can inform your majesty of my conduct, and of those marks of friendship with which I have been received.

I went to see a play at the army, and nothing can be more pitiable than the actors, who cannot play tragedy, and mutilate comedy. Drouillon, the person of whom your majesty has heard, is a vile comedian; his wife, who plays love parts, is much better than himself; yet she is bad, and so is supposed to be, in this wretched company; for the good actors have remained in the principal cities of the kingdom, being unwilling to travel the country.

There are here, at Paris, some provincial actresses,

treffes, who, being unable to procure engagements, are in want of such ; but they are little better than those I saw at the army. One came to me this morning whose name is Barnaud, offering to play the principal fine ladies. She is forty years of age, has lost five or six teeth, and is as lovely in appearance as madame de Hauteville. I did not fail to promise her I would inform your majesty of the great desire she has to go to Berlin, and I have acquitted myself of my promise.

I make this report to your majesty that you may feel the necessity there is of waiting some time longer. I shall meet with some good performer either at Rouen, Lyons, Marseilles, or Strasburg ; these are the places at which to make inquiries, for elsewhere no good actors are to be found : none but the outcasts of the companies of these cities. With respect to the theatre at Paris it is impossible to induce actors to leave it, without very considerable offers ; and equally good performers may be found in the country. But I wait your majesty's answer. The dancing muse arrived in very good health at Paris, and I delivered her to her cousin La Salé. I am exceedingly well satisfied with her conduct. She refused to dance at the army, notwithstanding she was solicited by several of the nobility,

who saw her at Liege and knew her again. She must continue to act in the same manner at Paris. Laurette is not here, nor here has been ; and I may add that the opera is totally deficient in performers ; and that, except La Camargo, whose age is forty-three, there are no female dancers but of the third rank, very inferior to the little Lani. I entreat your majesty to remain persuaded that I shall do every thing which is necessary to be done.

I believe I shall see Vanloo and his wife tomorrow. I wish to strike the poniard into their bosom, and make them sensible of their loss. They are silly people, who have suffered themselves to be deceived by the discourse of various persons that are unacquainted both with Berlin and with your majesty. Should it still be your intention to possess a great painter, I can procure you one much cheaper than Vanloo, who is as famous and as good an artist. Your majesty may choose between Natoire, who is at present the first painter in Paris, and Pierre ; the latter is the pupil of Le Moine, and perfectly possesses the taste, in drawing, and the colouring of his master. His pictures are highly esteemed, and his age is only thirty-five. Your majesty may gain information of his merit from Schmidt. These two painters and Vanloo form the first class ;

class ; the best in Paris, these excepted, are but of the second.

I yesterday saw Voltaire, and he appeared to be delighted to meet his friend Isaac. He would have taken me to visit madame de Pompadour, who is at a country-house near Paris ; but, my affairs detaining me in the city, I desired him to defer the visit for some days. Two days ago his law-suit with Thévenot, one of the opera band, was determined ; each was to pay his own costs of suit, and the memorials of Thévenot were condemned and suppressed as scandalous. Voltaire, with good reason, is dissatisfied with the sentence.

I supped with M. de Mairan in one of the first houses of Paris. He is a little man whose manners are very mild and polite, who speaks with much facility, who makes excellent remarks, and who has nothing of the pedantry of the mathematician. There is as much difference, between the conversation of him and that of M. Euler, as there is between the writings of Horace and those of the most learned and pedantic Wolfius. I formed an acquaintance with the abbé Bernis, at the house of madame d'Argental, who is the niece of the cardinal de Tencin. He is an amiable man, and is to give me two charming
little

little pieces, which I shall send your majesty by the first courier.

Paris is in high splendour, and seems wholly insensible of the war. Recruits are raised there with tolerable ease, and fifty battalions have been levied in the kingdom, the men of which will be clothed and armed by the month of March. I am active in my own affairs; and, thanks to the protection of your majesty, I hope they will be soon and happily ended. I have already entered into some measures with my brother, who is penetrated by the obligations he has to your majesty. The king has lately granted him the office of *Président à Mortier*, and has ordered the letters patent to be made out gratis, which is a very considerable recompense. I begin to be well persuaded he must have been in some danger of being hanged, and that the jokes of last winter were not without foundation. He notwithstanding affirms he never was in any fear of insult, and continues to praise the English highly. I believe he will soon be employed at some court, which is an additional reason to press the conclusion of my business, the moment of ending which I shall think a very happy one, since it will be that at which I shall depart to pay my court to your majesty, and again meet the best master on earth.

M. d'Arget

M. d'Arget informs me your majesty has done me the honour to write to me twice, but I have not been fortunate enough to receive either of your letters. I entreat your majesty to inform me to what place they have been directed, that I may send for them, and that you would be pleased to address those with which you shall honour me “ *Amon Chambellan le Marquis d'Argens, à l'hôtel de Strasbourg, rue du Sépulcre, faubourg Saint Germain, à Paris.*”

I have not yet been either at the French or Italian theatre, but have seen the opera twice, having the key of the box of the duc de Duras, formerly the duc Durfort, by which I avoid a considerable expence. Your majesty perceives that former friends are always serviceable, and that the court which I paid to the duc de Richelieu, at Philipsburg, is of use to me at present. I find the opera performers very indifferent, compared to those I have seen. The women singers are by no means of the first class. Le Mauve and La Pelissier * are no longer there. The men dancers are bad, Duprès excepted, who however is growing old. I have already spoken to your majesty of the women dancers.

There is a counter-tenor singer, or what the Italians call a contr'alto, who has the finest voice

* Both females. T.

I ever heard in my life ; his name is Gelio. One of the operas of Rameau is at present acting, which appears to me below mediocrity, and the music of which is neither French nor Italian.

There are no new publications here, except some wretched political pamphlets, which are not common sense. Voltaire has written an epistle on the battle lately fought, near Maftricht, which is printed but disavowed by him : he pretends that he did not write it in the manner it now appears. I do not send it your majesty, because I have no doubt it has already been sent by Thiriot.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R III.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Paris, August 26, 1747.

I HAVE, by favour of a banker, received one of the two letters which your majesty did me the honour to write. Permit me to say you wrongfully suspect me of indolence. During the month that I have been at Paris, I have entirely finished my business ; my relations have
taken

taken every thing into consideration, and nothing further is necessary, except stipulations to be mutually agreed on, so as to prevent similar inconveniences in future. They offer to cede, by public contract, the sum that I demand; which sum is to afford me an annuity. This affair is of so much importance to me that, though there are three hundred leagues to travel, going and coming, between Provence and Paris, I shall take post for Aix, at the end of this month, and shall be here again toward the end of September. On the first of October I shall depart, shall travel post, and on the 15th shall be at Berlin. Thus mademoiselle Cochois will be there more than six weeks before the opening of the opera-house.

Laurette does not come here, she is engaged to go to London. Some engines have been put in motion to induce La Cochois to engage at the opera, but they have been ineffectual. She has even refused to dance; I have beside publicly declared she was engaged. In fine, I will be responsible to your majesty on that affair.

Three days since the duc de Richelieu arrived at Paris; he is going to Genoa, and I should have accompanied him into Provence, but that he means to stay a fortnight at Paris, before

which time I shall be at Aix. I therefore cannot go with him.

A few days since I dined at Passy, with madame de Tencin, the sister of the cardinal, whose house is the rendezvous of the old wits. She is very polite, and is possessed of understanding. She put a question to me which I will hereafter repeat to your majesty.

I often sup with the abbé de Bernis, in one of the best houses of Paris. He there read two poetical pieces the other day, copies of which I requested, to send them to your majesty, and one of which I think you will find much superior to the other. The person of the abbé is very agreeable and his manners exceedingly mild.

I have twice seen the young Pretender, and have even once dined in his company. This prince is well made, has an air of modesty, speaks little, and appears to have much judgment. He told me he had heard, with infinite satisfaction, that, while he was in Scotland, your majesty spoke of him with great kindness. He is very ill at his ease here, and appears to support his situation with much fortitude. I have many things to say to your majesty, on the subject.

I have not yet spoken of the French or Italian theatre, in my letters. The latter is in general well supported. Sylvia still continues the best
actress

actress in the kingdom. Harlequin is a great performer. Caroline plays with more vivacity than genius, but she is handsome. De Haye acts the valet excellently, and Lelio is well adapted to the fop, and certain characteristic parts.

With respect to the French theatre, I find it dreadfully on the decline. The actress Dumenil, so much vaunted of by M. de Voltaire, has a sepulchral voice, and is frequently extravagant. Gauffin is handsome, but she can only play certain tender parts; in others she is below mediocrity. Carville has feeling, but she does not sufficiently study her characters. These actresses are all as far behind Le Couvreur, and De Seine, as the hyssop is inferior to the cedar. With respect to the men, Grandval plays tragedy tolerably well, and petits-mâtres in love divinely. Lanoue would be a great comedian, were not all his talents spoiled by his hideous figure. The other comedians are either bad or do not surpass mediocrity.

I have informed your majesty of what I think of the opera in my other letters.

I have seen M. de Maurepas, who behaved with great politeness to me, and even made me some offers of service.

The king is expected here about the tenth or

the twelfth of the next month, for which reason I shall not go to Versailles till I return from Provence ; for any visit which I might pay there at present appears to me to be of very little utility. To-morrow I am to dine at the house of the due d'Elbeuf, a prince of the family of Lorraine, with the elder Crébillon. In my first letter I shall write to your majesty concerning this author, and his tragedy of Catiline, which he is to read to the company.

I am with profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R I V.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Paris, September 5, 1747.

I RECEIVED the duplicate of the letter your majesty wrote, at the very moment I was about to depart for Provence. I have not yet been fortunate enough to obtain the original, but I went to the post-office, where I made a terrible uproar ; they promised they would seek for it, and make all possible inquiries.

I will execute your majesty's commissions to the best of my power. That of the man of letters, who must be no pedant, but of an amiable character,

character, appears to me the most difficult. All persons, in this country, who are possessed of certain abilities, are scarcely possible to obtain. Thus Greffet, for example, of whom your majesty speaks, has two places, the salaries of which amount to two thousand crowns; to this must be added he has a mistress, who is one of the prettiest women in Paris. A man prejudiced in favour of his country will never quit it, when he is detained both by interest and affection. The inclination which Frenchmen of literature have for Paris is so great, and they are so well satisfied with the pleasures which they imagine they find there, that it is even difficult to induce men of mediocrity to quit this city. The abbé le Blanc, whom your majesty wished to have, and whom you are very fortunate not to have obtained, is a man very little respected; one of the subaltern, nay the very subaltern wits; yet that man finds resources and pleasures, at Paris, in numerous families, because it is at present the mania, in France, to be intimate with men of wit; and financiers as well as dukes wish to have it said that the learned are admitted to their houses. There are young people who have gained knowledge; but some of them are totally deficient in the manners of persons of fashion, and are precisely nothing more than au-

thors. There are others who, having nothing but wit, are of despicable characters ; and, like the abbé Fréron, have visited the Bicêtre, or the prisons of Vincennes, for their unworthy conduct. Notwithstanding these difficulties, your majesty may be assured that, on my return from Provence, where I shall not remain more than three weeks, it shall be my endeavour to give you satisfaction.

With respect to the painter, that is an article of less difficulty : but I must act with cunning, otherwise our present man will demand the same sum your majesty was willing to have given Vanloo ; and I wish to obtain him at a cheaper rate.

I now come to the actresses. The two girls mentioned by Petit sing at the concert of Rouen, and have never acted in comedy. They are said to be tolerably handsome, but I think we should not have recourse to them, unless no good performers can be found at Lyons, where I shall be in four days ; or on my return, at Strasburg. Good actresses are very scarce, even at Paris ; and I can assure your majesty that, mademoiselle Babet having gained some reputation, and passing here for a girl of good understanding, proposals have been made to me concerning her, for the French theatre. Your majesty could not
but

but have laughed, had you seen the grimace with which I answered. I satisfied myself however with replying that people of merit and genius never quitted the service of your majesty. Your theatre has suffered a considerable loss in the younger Cochois, who it is true was an insolent lunatic, but an excellent comedian, and as much superior to the comic actors of the French theatre, at Paris, as Hauteville was superior to all competitors in folly. I shall immediately do myself the honour to inform your majesty of what I shall meet with at Lyons.

I am, with profound respect, &c.

LETTER V.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Marfeilles, September 27, 1747.

FROM the diligence I use, your majesty will no longer accuse me of indolence. I have been a week in Provence, where I have ended all my affairs to my satisfaction. I shall depart for Paris in six days, whither I shall return for the actresses Cochois, and your majesty may be assured we shall be at Berlin, according to our orders, by the end of the month of Oc-

tober. I shall then have travelled near six hundred leagues in two months, consequently your majesty will scarcely say that I travel slowly. On my arrival at Paris, I shall conclude my engagement with the painter, whom your majesty wishes to have; and you may be assured I will send you an excellent one.

On my road into Provence, I saw almost all the companies of comedians in the kingdom. The actors of the Dijon company are all below mediocrity; in that of Lyons there is a good comic actor, but he demands an extraordinary salary; there is also an indifferent fine lady, who is kept by a paramour, therefore not easy to obtain, and who is not worth the fourth of the salary she asks. The company at Aix, my dear native place, is execrable; there is not one performer capable of playing second parts, in a good comedy. In fine, the vexation of finding no one who could suit your majesty obliged me to go to Marfeilles, where I met with three of the most excellent performers in the kingdom. I do not except even those of Paris, to whom I think them superior, if we exclude Dumenil. Two of the three are the sieur Rouffelois and his wife, who had formerly been engaged for the service of your majesty, and who were not fortunate enough to go to
Berlin.

Berlin. The husband acts tragic parts in a superior style, as well as comic. He has the dignity and good sense of Baron, the fire of Dufrene, and the voice of the elder Quinault. He would long since have been at Paris, where he made his appearance with extraordinary success, had not a gentleman of the chamber, who imagined he had some reason of personal complaint against him, openly declared himself his enemy*! In fine, fire, I never have met with any man so perfect as this performer, who is as much superior to all the actors we have at Berlin as Cochois is to Augusta and Artus.

His wife is a young beauty of twenty, with an oval countenance, piercing and tender eyes, her nose thin, and her mouth small and gracefully intelligent. She is rather taller than Marian; her waist is slender and charming, and she acts with great delicacy and understanding. In tragedy she has the affecting voice of De Seine, and in deep love the dignity of Le Couvreur. Her lungs are rather feeble; but as she acts here six times a week, she will not be sen-

* The chief gentlemen of the king's chamber are, in France, at least have hitherto been, the legislators of the theatres; and have at the same time the executive power of the laws they themselves have made. An arrêt was issued to this purpose in 1757 by Louis *the well-beloved*. T.

fible of that inconvenience at Berlin, where she may have three or four days rest in that time.

The third is a tall girl of seventeen, whose name is Drouin, the sister of a comedian, who acts the principal parts at Paris. Her figure is beautiful, her eyes full of ardour, her mouth pleasing, and her countenance good. She has much intelligence, as an actress, performs the fine lady with good sense, and the chamber maid in case of need. She also delivers tragedy exceedingly well.

All the three are ready to engage in the service of your majesty. I at first met with some difficulty, with the sieur Rouffelois and his wife, because he complained that he had before been induced to give up a very considerable engagement, which he had at Bordeaux ; but I made him so sensible of the advantages attending being in the service of your majesty that he is, at present, delighted to enter that service.

I have made no agreement yet with these performers, nor shall, till I have first the honour to learn what are your majesty's intentions ; because I cannot say whether the conditions, which they propose, will be agreeable to you. I saw the written articles of the sieur Rouffelois and his wife, at this place, and they have each of them a thousand French crowns, and demand each a thousand German crowns. Eight hundred

dred I offered, and harangued, with all my rhetoric, a whole hour to no effect.

With respect to the little Drouin, I call her little because she is exceedingly graceful, and still has those childish manners which so well become youth, she consents to engage for six hundred crowns. There is another circumstance of which I must not neglect to inform your majesty, which is that they cannot come before Easter, because their engagements do not end till that time. And it is here necessary I should offer a reflection to your majesty; you will not at present, sire, meet with any, except very bad performers, who are not under engagements till the same period. I shall further observe to your majesty that I should advise you not again to receive those who have deserted; because, having been guilty of one bad action, they are capable of committing a second, and thus of quitting your majesty's service. I imagine therefore it is necessary you should have patience till Easter. The company must pass through the winter as well as it can; and I undertake, with the present actors, to represent one good comedy per week, till that time.

Permit me to make one remark to your majesty. We are continually recruiting largely but seldom to any good purpose. Since I have
seen

seen the comedians of Paris and those of Marfeilles, I can truly assure your majesty I am more than ever convinced you have but two comedians who deserve the name, of actor or actress, and those are Favier and La Cochois. How bad will all the rest appear compared to the performers I at present propose ! And as to the girls, mentioned by Petit, they will be such indifferent actresses that they have been refused engagements even in inferior companies. They sing in chorus, in the concert at Rouen. I likewise think that we are in want of ready formed players, and not of such as are yet to form, and who perhaps never would be formed.

I am, with profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Paris, November 3, 1747.

I HAVE been two days at Paris, which place I should have immediately left, had not Mademoiselle Cochois requested four or five days, to dispatch some business. I agreed, without difficulty, because I comprehended that, considering the desertion of Lani and the other wretches,

wretches, she will arrive soon enough for the opera rehearsals; since Sodi, and the other performers that are engaged, cannot depart before the 10th or 12th of this month, by which time she will be on the road.

Nothing can be more shocking than the behaviour of Lani; he deserves to feel the whole weight of your majesty's indignation. I have spoken to every person in Paris as I ought to speak, respecting this fellow, and his companions in desertion and knavery; and I shall continue to make their character so well known, before I leave the city, that they will repent of their folly. Lani has procured an engagement for his sister at the French theatre, where she has already danced and played two parts; but one of the opera directors, with whom I am acquainted, has promised me that he will oblige her to quit the company; because, having formerly belonged to the opera, she cannot be engaged at the playhouse.

As I know of no better way of paying my court, to your majesty, than by always speaking the truth, I am persuaded I shall not displease you, when I assure you those who have said that Teissier had held discourse by which he merited disgrace have misinformed you. Your majesty knows I would rather die than impose upon
you

you in the most trifling affair ; and I can protest that, while I remained at Paris, though he was pressed by the directors of the opera to engage with them, he continually spoke with the most profound respect, on every subject that had any relation to your majesty. I was desirous to know whether, during my absence, he had committed any fault ; I therefore yesterday spoke to M. de Chambrier, and the following are the very words of your majesty's minister.—“ I must
“ do justice to Teissier, he is very different from
“ the others, and has on every occasion spoken
“ with all possible zeal, in favour of Berlin and
“ of the king. This is a testimony which I owe
“ to truth, and which I shall be happy to pay,
“ should I ever be questioned by his majesty.”

The answer of M. de Chambrier determined me to write on the subject ; especially as I must not conceal from your majesty that we are in great want of Teissier. All the men whom we have engaged here are bad performers, except Sodi. The rest are by no means equal to Giraud, of which you yourself will soon be convinced. Your majesty perhaps will ask why I suffered Petit to engage such indifferent performers. To this I answer I was not at Paris, when they were engaged ; and that, even if I had been there, I must have acted as he has done,
since

since the shortness of the time and the necessity of having a ballet for the opera, this winter, did not leave any freedom of choice. Thus we were obliged to be satisfied with performers who, at another time, would not have been engaged. Had I dared to take any thing upon myself, I would have limited the engagements of these people to a shorter period; though, to speak freely, I believe most of them will take leave in less than two years without a dismissal. Did I know another serious dancer any way equal to Teissier I should dwell less on his recalculation; but I am vexed that we should leave the Parisians a performer for whom it will be so difficult to find a substitute, and whom they in some short time intend as the successor of Duprès; for he has certainly given great pleasure.

Caroline would not accept of eight thousand livres, her demand is ten. I must likewise inform your majesty that you have no doubt been deceived by the name of Caroline. You have supposed it was the elder sister, the actress who pleases infinitely at Paris; but it is the younger sister, who is yet only a child. She is no higher than little Lani was, when she first came to Berlin, than whom she has less merit, and dances much less scientifically. True it is she has more feeling, and is handsomer; but to
give

give a salary of eight thousand livres to a child, who has only a quarter share * at the Italian theatre, for she has only eighteen hundred livres, is surely to pay well. Permit me to observe to your majesty that granting too large salaries, to performers who are not very excellent, is the reason that those who are, at length, require an increase of salary; and, though they should be well paid, they persuade themselves they are not so.

A lady of the name of madame Ribou came to visit me this morning, and I thought she would not have been satisfied with any thing less than both my eyes. She accused me of being the cause that she has not been engaged, I having so precipitately engaged performers at Marseilles. I answered, till the very moment in which I had the honour to speak to her, I was ignorant that there was such a person on earth. To this she replied so much the worse for me: I said nothing more, for I feared a beating; but, in order to rid myself of her, I promised to

* The performers both of the French and Italian theatres manage their own affairs, consequently are not in the pay of a proprietor or proprietors; and, as the property is their own, they share their profits, stipulating with any new performer whom they receive to grant such portion of a whole share as the abilities of the candidate may demand. T.

write concerning her to your majesty. I have been told that you intended to have granted her a salary of a thousand crowns; but your majesty would have been rather surpris'd, the first you should have met a woman forty years of age, and tolerably ugly. As an actress, I know not whether she be good or bad; but I have conceived an indifferent opinion of her talents, because she has more than eight months been left to trapes the streets of Paris without meeting any engagement. It appears to me that performers for your majesty's service are engaged without sufficient examination; and particularly that very free use is made of your purse.

An actor, named Loinville, has been to me, and informed me that he had been written to, and that he required a salary of eight thousand livres. I shrugged my shoulders and turned away. I knew this Loinville, whom I have seen in Provence, almost thirty years ago. He is a good country comedian, but nothing more; inferior to Favier, but superior to the others whom we have.

M. Petit brought me a woman whom he intended to engage, to play queens and heroines. She is neither handsome nor even pretty, but she is not very ugly. I heard her repeat some
lines

lines with good sense, and she rehearsed a comic scene with great vivacity. She asked a thousand crowns, I offered six hundred, and signified to M. Petit that I should sign her engagement on no other terms. I conclude her to be engaged, and that she will be in your majesty's service.

Petit introduced to me two young people, to play the inferior tragic parts, and the second-lovers, with whom I was exceedingly well satisfied. They are youthful, pleasing in figure, have good voices, and are intelligent. I heard them rehearse two or three scenes, and, though they only pretend to the parts I have mentioned, I think them as good, and perhaps better, than Desforges and Remusberg; at least they act with more intelligence and nature. I offered them four hundred crowns, and declared I would take no part in their engagement on any other terms.

In the course of the week we shall find the two confidants, of whom we still are in want, to render the Berlin company the most complete and the best in Europe. M. Darget wrote to inform me of your majesty's intentions, on that subject; and I wish to engage, at the price I offered the two young men, two pretty girls of character and talents; for, should I accept those whose manners are loose, they would desert, and the company would again be in disorder.

I sent the engagement concluded to Rouffelois and his wife ; and I repeat, what I before said to your majesty, that, Dumenil and Lanoue excepted, you have in these two performers obtained the best France affords. They will depart at the beginning of Lent, with little Drouin, who is as pretty as Barbarini, is better made, and who will in less than a year be the most lovely actresses in Europe. M. Lenfant, navy commissioner in Provence, will send their articles to Berlin, to my address, which they will give him when he shall deliver mine ; therefore their articles will be at Berlin before me.

In less than three days I shall have engaged one of the greatest painters in Paris. I am in treaty with two, and shall close with the most reasonable ; for, whenever men of abilities, whom your majesty wishes to possess, offer me proposals which I think in the least unreasonable, I laugh in their face and seek for others.

I send no news concerning the army to your majesty, because you will hear this as soon as I can. While I was in Provence, I obtained memorials of the two last campaigns in Italy, which may amuse your majesty.

I forgot to inform your majesty that, not having received your orders to engage the figurante, of whom I spoke, till I arrived at Paris,

don Philip, who had before seen her at Marfeilles, and who like me thought her pretty, offered her an engagement, as a second dancer, in a company which he intends to have this winter, in the city where he shall reside, and sent for her to Nice in the interim. The charming girl however had the fortitude to hesitate, between the prince and the chamberlain. She told me that, were I but certain she should be received, she would depart for Berlin. No orders had reached me, I therefore feared lest I should injure the poor girl; and, not daring to take upon me to insure her an engagement, she departed for Nice. I am sorry I was not fortunate enough to receive the letter, in which M. d'Arget desired me to engage her, in Provence. I have lost the consolation of my old days.

*Plus gente chérubine ne se vit onc ;
Blancheur de lis, & croupe de chanoine*.*

Should your majesty however wish to see this miracle of our age caper at the Berlin theatre, she has told me she will come there, if you will engage her, at Easter; and that she will accompany Rouffelois and his wife.

I will do myself the honour to write to

* Angel more lovely was never seen; the complexion of the lily, and the hip of a nun.

your

your majesty, by the first post, concerning the painter.

Voltaire is at Fontainebleau, from which he will return on Wednesday, and I shall sup with him at the house of madame du Chatelet. He perhaps may supply me with some literary intelligence, to send your majesty.

I am, with profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

The petition of a poor sick patient, to a great king in good health.

S I R E,

Potsdam, March 28, 1750.

I HAVE two days flattered myself with the pleasing hope that I should be fortunate enough to pay my court to your majesty; but, ever since yesterday, I have lost the use of half of my limbs. A vile scorbutic humour is every moment assuming a different form. M. Cothenius assures me that, by the aid of ten or twelve days, he will render me as athletic as a wrestler at the Olympic games.

But I have another malady, of which your

D 2

majesty

majesty alone can cure me ; which malady is the fear of having displeased you ; and all remedies for the body are impotent, while the mind is diseased. After the example of the Messiah, your majesty may afford me an instantaneous cure, by desiring the holy abbé de Prades to assure me, on your part, that I may swallow in peace all the diabolic beverage which Cothenius shall prescribe. Let not your majesty imagine that the trade of miracle-monger does not become you ; recollect it is a trade which has not been held in contempt by the greatest princes. Vespasian, the successor of so many wicked emperors, and who put an end to the sufferings of the empire, condescended to cure a lame man, by treading on his leg, in Syria ; and a blind man, in Judea, by rubbing his eyes with his saliva. Your majesty will perform a miracle with less trouble ; and you will allow that, however little may be my worth, I am at least equal to an old blind Jew.

I therefore recommend myself to your bounty ; and, extended on my couch between two old books, one Greek and the other Latin, have the honour to remain, with the most profound respect, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R VIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Paris, May 14, 1751.

I SHOULD have done myself the honour to have written to your majesty, on my arrival at Paris, had I not feared to displease. Supposing, as I did, you were dissatisfied with my conduct, I apprehended you would condemn such a liberty ; nor can I express the joy I felt, when M. de Chambrier informed me that your majesty had the goodness to permit me to write to you ; because this gives me an opportunity again to assure your majesty that I have been obliged, by an obstinate and dangerous disease, not to pay that punctual obedience to your commands which I could have wished.

It is now about seven months since I arrived at Paris, in a deplorable condition. M. de Chambrier must have certified to your majesty that I do not impose, and that I never have imposed upon you, on this subject. Agreeable to the prescriptions of the most able physicians, I durst not neglect going to pass the winter in a country extremely warm. Had I not been ill, why should I not have remained all winter at

Paris, instead of repairing to the foot of the mountains of Genoa? I have been returned about a month, in exceeding good health. I made it my first care, when I came to Paris, to visit M. de Chambrier, that I might learn whether he had received any orders for me, and his answer was that he knew nothing precisely on this business. I was therefore prevented from continuing my journey to Berlin, not knowing whether I had the misfortune to be in total disgrace with your majesty. Let me be permitted to request, with the most respectful ardour, that you would be pleased to inform me what are your commands. I should esteem myself most happy, should I have the good fortune to be continued in the service of the best master the world affords. Never since I have been distant from your majesty have I, for a moment, lost sight of the bounty with which you have honoured me, and which, let me live in what country on earth I may, will ever remain engraved on my heart.

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

L E T.

LETTER IX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 8, 1754.

TWO hours before break of day, the postillion, whom your majesty did me the honour to send to me, came knocking at my door. All my servants were fast asleep; and, having myself been the first to hear him, I called, with might and main, that they should let in Mr. Carita, my apothecary, who was bringing me the emulsion that I was to take that morning. A moment after my lacquey entered my chamber, followed by a man in boots, dressed in blue, and holding a packet in his hand. I rubbed my eyes, and opened them as wide as I could, unable to comprehend by what enchantment an apothecary had been suddenly metamorphosed into a postillion, and a bottle of emulsion into a letter.

Somewhat come to myself, I heaved a half paralytic arm from under the bed-clothes, opened the letter, and, by the light of a candle, which my almost naked footman held, I read your majesty's verses; which, by way of paren-

thesis, had they been written even by a private person, would have immortalised me. They are worthy of Chaulieu.

Having finished reading, I bolstered myself up ; and thus propped, like a ruinous building, I have now the honour to write these few lines to your majesty, which have cost me many an oh, and ah ! For you know, sire, I am very far from a stoic.

Your majesty however does not do me justice, when you suppose me confined to my bed by indolence. Not but the supposition might have had some probability on its side, had I been required to go from Potsdam to Berlin ; but for me to remain at Berlin, when I might be at Potsdam, it were necessary I should be as much a paralytic as the man of the gospel. I hope however I shall be cured, in three or four days ; and Pharmacy assures me I have only to take some two dozen clysters, swallow three prescriptions, and use six bottles of emulsion, and that it will then say to me “ Take up thy bed and walk—begone to “ Potsdam.”

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R X.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potfdam, November 7, 1754.

SINCE it has pleased your majesty to add to the title of conqueror that of reconciler of prodigal sons, and that you have undertaken to bring within the pale of the church a father of the eighteenth century, the abbé de Prades, I dare flatter myself you will procure Esau's portion for me; and that, disinherited as I am, like that ancient Jew, I shall still have the honour to receive paternal benediction. This service your majesty may render me, which will make me prosperous in the life present, and the life to come.

My father, and all my relations, have written the most pressing letters to me, to request your majesty would be pleased to order your ambassador, at Paris, to recommend to M. de Sechel* a person named M. Pseautier, a director of the post-office in Provence, when any opportunity shall offer for M. de Sechel to render him ser-

* I imagine this must be the M. Sechelles mentioned by the king, with so much respect, in the History of my own Times; and by M. d'Arget, in his Letters: if so, the name here is erroneously spelled. T.

vice.

vice. The man asks only a vague letter of recommendation, the effects of which perhaps will never take place ; not but it may some day procure him a more lucrative post.

My father, who for twenty years past has never written to me but with great coldness, speaks in the most affectionate manner, in his letter, and tells me, should I oblige him on this occasion, he will one day repair a part of the ill he has done me. I own to your majesty that, should he bequeath me four or five thousand crowns, at his death, more than would otherwise revert to me, I should not be vexed. I know that, while attached to your majesty, I never shall be in want ; but cannon balls have killed men ; ay, even Turenne, Berwick, and Charles XII. If your majesty will but enter into bond never more to command armies, I will most willingly renounce all legacies after the death of my father. I being ten years older than your majesty, and having thirty fits of the colic and fifteen of the rheumatism per month, I must, by the indubitable calculation of the greatest arithmeticians, strike my mundane tent fifteen years before your majesty.

I am, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potsdam, October 4, 1756

I KNOW not whether the letter which I have the honour to write to your majesty will be delivered to you at Vienna ; for in truth, according to the manner in which you manage matters, we ought to suppose that you will take a province once a fortnight. It is a month since you left Potsdam, and you are now master of Saxony ; and, by the glorious victory which you have just gained over the Austrians, half of the kingdom of Bohemia is under your power. All Europe resounds with your high deeds ; and the public papers have already informed the world that your progress, and the conquests of your armies, are principally due to your own celerity, courage, and the extent of your genius.

There is one circumstance however which afflicts me. We are told that your majesty very cavalierly remained six-and-thirty hours without taking any food : and that, on the eve of the battle, you did not afford yourself leisure to eat a single mouthful. Let me entreat your majesty to remember that excellent remark in your poem of the
Palladium—

Palladium—" *Le pain fait le soldat* *." This is a most important truth. Fame is the food of the soul, but the stomach requires something more substantial; especially when it is weak, and when the prosperity of a great state depends on the stomach and the health of the body. Make the Saxons fast as long as you please; you have my full consent; but do not set them the pernicious example of learning to live without food.

A-propos of the Saxons, when I remember the manner in which you treat them, I am tempted to believe, that to the title of archbishop of Magdeburg, you intend to add that of grand penitentiary †; and that you think it necessary to oblige the king of Poland, and his soldiers, to fast till the period of penance which you have imposed upon them shall be accomplished. In the mean time, they will have no need of rhubarb, or digestive powders. Indigestion is a malady to which they will not be subject, and count Bruhl will leave the camp with a waist as slender as a girl of fifteen.

Before I conclude my letter, permit me to entreat your majesty, in quality of bishop, to grant absolution to the abbé de Prades, should he by chance have knocked some Austrian on the

* Bread makes the soldier.

† A dignity in catholic cathedrals.

T.

head,

head, and have incurred the censure of holy mother church.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

From the King.

Undated.

MY troops, my dear marquis, have performed wonders. For my own part, poor philosopher as I am, I was but one man among twenty-five thousand. You laugh at the hungry Saxons, but we must take these people by some means or other; and there is no better way to tame a Lucullus than that of obliging him to fast. I received your first letter, but returned no answer, because I was among hills and dales.

I have left the abbé in Saxony, not wishing he should stain his hands with pure catholic blood.

The brain of the French is turned; nothing can be more indecent than what they say, concerning me. It might be affirmed that the salvation of France depends on the house of Austria. The tears of a dauphiness have been more eloquent

quent than the manifesto I have published against the Austrians, and Saxons. In fine, my dear marquis, I deplore the consequences of that earthquake which has driven all the politicians of Europe mad, and I wish you tranquillity, health, and content.

Adieu.

L E T T E R XIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potsdam, October 17, 1756.

ALBA then is incorporated with Rome! By your prudence, the enemies of the state will become its citizens, and defenders! After actions so splendid, where is the man, however prejudiced, who will not be obliged to acknowledge the superiority of your information? The French condemn you; thus did the Athenians declaim against Philip, when he became the arbitrator of Greece. You will be the arbitrator of Europe. It is but natural that the modern Athenians, who are as frivolous as were the ancient, should

should imitate their conduct. The injurious discourse of the French will be the eulogium of your glory. I wish these lunatics, seduced by false hopes, may make bonfires whenever you shall happen to have a day's illness, and announce your death. Such indecent rejoicings form the finest anecdote in the history of William III.

I have carefully executed the commission with which the count von Finckenstein has charged me ; but, as I do not understand the German, and he was obliged to employ the printer, who is under oath, and who prints all the manuscripts of the palace, which are meant to be kept secret till their publication, I have been obliged to recur to M. de Francheville, for the correction of the press, who is likewise under oath, who does understand the German language, and who has corrected the edition of your majesty's works. I have acted thus with the consent and by the advice of the count von Finckenstein.

With respect to your majesty's letter, it is excellent, and written with all possible dignity. A single word only has been altered. The count von Finckenstein having informed me that the Swedes have eagerly demonstrated much good will for a month past, and that he feared they

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would

would be exceedingly offended, by the phrase *cruel and sanguinary aristocracy*, I have substituted *tumultuous aristocracy*. I hope your majesty will not condemn this trifling alteration, in order to soften ; since your minister appeared to me to be in real pain.

I and M. Fédérdsorf have been in inconceivable grief, at receiving letters from Berlin in which it was affirmed you had been wounded, in an ambuscade, and that you were certainly taken prisoner. The intelligence was related so circumstantially that it threw us into despair. We immediately sent to Berlin, to inquire at the fountain head ; and, after having suffered seven hours, we learnt that all which our letters contained was one string of falsehoods. Permit me to inform your majesty of a *bon mot* of M. Mitchel, the English envoy, occasioned by these fabricators of bad news.—“We find Jacobites,” said he, “at Berlin ; yet it is singular “that there is no pretender*.”

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The supposed wit of this *bon mot* I imagine to be a pun, insinuating that the king was not, like the hero of the Jacobites, a mere pretender. T.

LETTER XIV.

From the King.

1757.

THIS year, my dear marquis, has been a dreadful one to me. I shall make every possible and every impossible attempt, to save the state; but, the truth is, I have more need than ever of secondary causes to be successful. The affair of the 5th of November was a very fortunate one. We have taken eight French generals, two hundred and sixty officers, and more than six thousand men prisoners. Our loss is one colonel, two officers, and sixty-seven soldiers, with two hundred and twenty-three wounded. This was more than I could have hoped. We must see what the future will produce.

I have been obliged to arrest the abbé; he has acted the spy, of which I have many evident proofs. His proceedings are highly ungrateful, and infamous.

I have written a prodigious quantity of poetry. If I live, I will shew you my verses, in winter quarters; if I fall, I have bequeathed them to you, and have ordered them to be delivered to you.

Our good people of Berlin have no reason at present to fear a visit, either from Austrians or

Swedes ; and, by gaining one battle, I have derived nothing but the advantage of being able safely to oppose other enemies. This season of terror, and this dreadful war, will certainly form an epocha in history. Your Frenchmen have been guilty of cruelties worthy of pandours, and have acted like disgraceful marauders. The bitterness which they testify toward me is really very shameful. Their proceedings only tend to make an irreconcilable enemy of one who has been sixteen years their friend.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I imagine you are in bed ; do not lie there and rot, but recollect you have promised to join me in winter quarters. You have still time enough to take your rest, for at present I know not where to appoint you a rendezvous. Mine is the destiny of Mithridates, except that I want two sons and a Monimia.

Adieu, my amiable, indolent, marquis.

L E T T E R X V .

From the King.

Undated.

REMEMBER, my dear marquis, that man is rather a feeling than a rational animal.

I have

I have read and re-read the third book of Lucretius, but found nothing there except the necessity of evil, and the inefficacy of all remedy. The only alleviation I can find, for my grief, is in the daily labour I am obliged to undergo, and that continual employment with which I am furnished, by the number of my foes. Had I been cut off, at Kolin, I should now have been in a harbour where I should no more be in dread of storms. But I must continue to be tossed on a tempestuous ocean, till some yard and a half of earth shall afford me that good which in this world I sought in vain.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I wish you health, and every kind of happiness, which I myself want.

L E T T E R XVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

S I R E,

Berlin, April 29, 1758.

I N the letter which your majesty did me the honour to write, I found new marks of your bounty. You resemble the good genii of the ancients, who, whenever they appeared to those

they protected, it was by heaping new favours upon them. When shall I be happy enough to thank you for all your bounties, at Sans-Souci? When shall I there see you enjoy that peace which your glorious labours shall have procured? You inform me you are preparing to give your enemies battle, which is as much as to say you are preparing to vanquish them. Yet am not I the less alarmed. I incessantly fear, as do all your faithful subjects, of whom you are the father, lest some accident should happen to you. The glory and the prosperity of the kingdom center in you alone.

I know not whether I can profit by the leave which your majesty has deigned to grant me, because of my still great weakness. To aid me in undertaking a journey which is so necessary to me, your majesty might render me an essential service; if, to so many other favours, you should be pleased to add one more; which must be the last, for to importune you further would be to abuse your majesty's kindness.

I have met at Berlin with a cousin german of mine, M. de Mons, a captain in the regiment of Piedmont, a young man of three-and-thirty, whose conduct at Berlin and at Magdeburg has merited the public esteem, and the friendship of M. von Seidlitz, who can give your
majesty

majesty his character. Should you be pleased to grant him permission to go to Aix, on his parole, he will accompany me as far as Chambéri; after which I shall continue my route through Savoy for Nice; and he his through Dauphiné for Aix. It will be a circumstance of great utility to me to have the company of a French officer as far as Swisserland, and especially of a kinsman and a friend. I venture to add to these reasons that all my relations, and especially my mother, from whom I expect the greatest part of what I am to inherit, will be infinitely obliged to me for this permission.

Thus, if your majesty will grant me this favour, after having loaded me with your benefits, you will procure me new wealth in my own country, and will bring those disputes to an easy conclusion into which I perhaps shall have to enter. Pardon me, sire, for having written thus at length, at a time when you are occupied by the most serious affairs. But I know the excess of your goodness; nor can you imagine the kindness you will do me, should you grant me the favour I take the liberty to request.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

From the King.

Undated.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear marquis, without a date, so that I may suppose it came from the ruins of Carthage, or from Cochinchina. But what leads me to presume that you are in Provence is that, since your departure, the newspapers are all filled with accounts of a monster, which is committing dreadful ravages in that province, and which can be only you: for, in quality of Prussian, you must pass for a monster in France, or at least at Versailles. And supposing even that were not so, the people perhaps have seen you wrapped up in your riding coat, with your hood over your head, and your handkerchief up to your nose, forming a figure which I own is monstrous enough, to people who never saw it before.

The gazettes say you devour women and children. Fie upon you! Where did you learn that villanous trade? I never knew you guilty of such tricks. But our manners are changed by travelling. Should this be a false accusation, still

still, from a Jansenist, as you were, you are turned Jesuit, because your brother of Eguilles is one, and he has given you I know not what farms to corrupt you. You, marquis, are the man described by the proverb : “ Shew me your
“ companions and I will tell you your fortune.” I know that you sometimes act the sick man ; but that is only that you may haunt the woods, and be the bugbear of a whole country.

Not satisfied with exciting rumours in Provence, you wish to trouble the peace of Paris. But what would my brother the most Christian king say, were he to hear that the monster, my chamberlain, were come to devour the children of the park of Versailles, the wood of Senar, and the forest of Fontainebleau. A squadron of dragoons has been sent after you into Provence ; the French guards will be at your heels in Paris ; and in despite of your address, which is said to be great in leaping from branch to branch, a musket ball may happen to catch you. Should you even restrain this voracity, and while you live at Paris be satisfied, like all honest people who inhabit this globe, with eating fish, cows, and calves, what a noise would the gazette writers make ! These gentlemen have affirmed that you are charged with commissions so secret that they are unknown even to me ; and, hear-

ing you were at Paris, they would give their lies a colouring which should make them credited by the public. The whole corps diplomatique would be in motion, knowing you were arrived; the spies would begin to trot about, and false rumours would take wing.

Such would be the fruits of your travels. And what good would you effect? You have an annuity on the hotel de ville, which is regularly paid you. Do you wish to speak to your friends? That you may do, and stop at a village not far from the city, at which the people with whom you have business may give you the meeting. You will do well to retreat through Brussels for Wesel; but for the love of God eat up no children on your journey. Meat is cheap, and you may have it in every place; and should your imagination be inflamed so much, by the heat of the sun of Provence, as to cause you to act the monster, let the phlegmatic sun of Westphalia cool your head so far as to render you, on your return, the same man you were at your departure.

I expect you, marquis, in the month of September; and prodigious diligence you will then indeed have made; for, as far as I recollect, the three kings only travelled thirteen miles in fifteen days. In fine, you will act in this according

ing to your usual prudence ; and I recommend you, and every thing that relates to you, to the holy keeping of the Eternal Father.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Hamburg, February 22, 1759.

AFTER having rendered ten thousand thanks to your majesty, for the kindness you have had in permitting me to regain my health, and take time to recover from a fit of sickness, a hundred times more dangerous, and more tedious, than that which I suffered at Breslau, I venture to inform you that I am much more courageous than you suppose, and that I shall depart in five days for Berlin, almost deprived of the use of a leg. Should not herb baths and summer strengthen my nerves, then must I be supported by a melancholy crutch for the remainder of my life. Had I been lamed in the service of your majesty, it would have been some consolation ; but to become helpless in a bed and an arm chair is exceedingly vexatious. One thing however comforts me, which is that you have,

for three years, been so accustomed to see the halt, the maimed, and the blind, men lamed in every possible mode, that you will not take it ill when I appear before you with the left haunch higher than the right, and one leg projecting at a right angle.

Would the other were the same, provided I might but once see you at Potsdam, in peaceful enjoyment of the immortal glory which you have acquired. I hope autumn will restore you to your people, happy, and in perfect health. You have gained new allies, who are going to make a powerful diversion into Italy in your favour. Never could the king of Spain have died more seasonably. One effort more, sire, for this campaign, and the cause is won. Then may you say, with David, I have seen the nations shake, rise against me, and form vain projects; they have been scattered as the wind scatters the clouds, and their hopes have been but as vain dreams*.

After speaking of the Hebrew poet, I take the liberty to send your majesty some verses on cardinal Cotin, which are said to be written by Fréron. Perhaps you have not yet seen them, and I imagine you will not think them bad.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* This is no faithful citation of any one passage in the Psalms. T.

L E T T E R XIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 26, 1759.

I RECEIVED the letter your majesty did me the favour to write at the moment I was leaving Hamburg, and I waited till I came to Berlin to have the honour of answering you ; for, till my arrival there, I had never for a moment been certain, because of the weak state I am in, when I should be fortunate enough to see it again. At length, after the labour of fourteen days, I have most gloriously completed a journey of thirty miles.

My health notwithstanding is better ; and would your majesty but permit me to make a campaign of six weeks, or two months continuance, I hope to be able, during the months of July and August, to attend you as far as Vienna. This would be no expence either to me or to your majesty. I have been obliged to purchase horses ; for, be it peace or be it war, one of my legs will not bear me an hour together ; I therefore keep a coach.

Notwithstanding what your majesty says, of the superiority of numbers of the enemy, I remain convinced that you will finally oblige them

to

to agree to a glorious peace. The finances of France are in the most pitiable state ; she has no longer any credit in foreign countries, and her trade is entirely ruined. The English manage in a manner which may best reduce her to accept such conditions as shall be offered. Should they make themselves masters of Quebec, they will, if they please, oblige the French to go to war with the queen of Hungary. Their last conquest, the taking of Guadeloupe, has completely thrown all the merchants in the kingdom in a consternation. In fine, there are, literally, neither money, ships, nor trade, in France ; therefore how can the subsidies hereafter be paid ? Let but one effort be made, this summer, and peace cannot but be concluded in autumn. I have, within this month, conversed with several of the greatest merchants of Hamburg ; and, among others, with two who, within a fortnight, had been in France ; the one at Marseilles, the other at Bordeaux. The first assured me that, instead of four hundred and sixty merchant ships, which were sent every year from Marseilles into the Levant, seventeen only had left that port, for the last two years ; all the others having been taken, burnt, or sunk. The merchant from Bordeaux informed me that, within these eleven months, three ships only had left that port for the American islands and

and the north; instead of between five and six hundred, which annually used to depart for different latitudes. In fine, sire, it is a certain fact that, for eighteen months past, the French have not received a pound of sugar from their plantations. The Danes take up the sugar from the refining houses of Hamburg, carry it for sale to France, and return back with the French money. Never was France so low in the state of her finances, not even during the greatest misfortunes of Louis XIV.

To this add the discontent of the nation is general; the people call for peace; a kind of phrenzy has seized on their council of state; the ministers hate each other, and labour for mutual destruction; changes in administration are almost daily. Remember these things, and your majesty will perceive that France must seriously think of peace.

Beside, if she be exhausted, who can pay subsidies to the Barbarians and Tartars? Who shall bribe the Swedes? Who shall maintain that multitude of collegiate scum which is called the army of the empire?

The Austrians I allow are brave fellows, and enemies that ought not to be despised; but you have beaten them so often that you will beat them again, whenever you please to employ that superior intelligence that has been bestowed on

you by nature. Europe is persuaded of the truth of what I say, and your majesty's enemies, notwithstanding their numbers, appear to be far from certain of their own success. I know the discourse they hold, because I come from a country in which they have many partisans. The only thing which could render your enemies victorious would be the death of your majesty. You ought therefore, sire, to think of your own preservation; not only relative to yourself but for the interest of your people. With respect to myself, of all men in the world I have most reason to wish prosperity to your majesty; for, were I unfortunate enough to lose you, I would rather go and live in some English colony, of America, than return to France. I cannot express to your majesty all the injustice that has been done me, for some months past; and it was exceedingly fortunate that I immediately drew thirty-two thousand livres, from Hamburg; for they refuse, at present, to pay me the fifteen thousand that became due the beginning of February. My brother writes me word that all he can do is to pay me the interest of the sum, which he will keep till peace shall be concluded, and affairs assume a different face.

The farther to vex me, the king's people have denounced my *Philosophie du Bon Sens** to the

* The philosophy of good sense.

parliament of Paris, as an impious book ; and it has been burnt by the hands of the hangman. The sentence by which it was condemned was inserted in all the foreign gazettes. Let me entreat your majesty to recollect that this book has been printed three-and-twenty years ; that it was published in Holland, consequently in a country over which France has no jurisdiction ; and that no man in France, till that moment, had thought proper to discover any thing contrary to good morals, or the Deity ! Can more hatred or passion be shewn ? But these people do not even endeavour to conceal their failings ; for, by the same sentence, they have condemned the poem of Voltaire *sur la Religion Naturelle** to the flames ; and they have had the insolence to insert in their sentence, which they have caused to be printed—*A poem by the Sieur de Voltaire, dedicated to the king of Prussia.*

What afflicts me most is that, in despite of all these subjects of complaint, I am obliged to be silent, to dissemble, and to wait for peace to claim what is my due ; and likewise to wait for the patrimony of my mother, who is now more than eighty. But I can protest to your majesty that, should I have the misfortune to lose you, I should prefer being deprived of all I have in

* On natural religion.

the world, to the constraint of living in a country where indignities like these are authorised.

Were I twenty years younger, I should ask your majesty's permission to make a campaign in the army of prince Ferdinand.

I have the honour to be &c.

L E T T E R XX.

From the King,

Undated.

YOU will think it very ridiculous, my dear marquis, that I should so long have promised you news without sending you any. It is not, most assuredly, my fault, but rather the want of events, for which we must wait, and the distances which the couriers have to travel, before they can bring intelligence.

I have nothing to inform you of, either political or military, except that marshal Daun has encamped his numerous army, and that I am still in cantonments, but with one foot in the stirrup.

I hear some good news from Saxony, which is very agreeable to me ; and I should be still
more

more delighted had the blows been more decisive. Great good fortune is necessary, for us to obtain any advantage over our enemies. For this I entreat Heaven; but, as I have not the protection of St. Simeon Stylites, nor of St. Anthony, nor of St. John Chrysostom, nor even of St. Fiacre*, I doubt whether Heaven will hear the prayer of a poor profane mortal, who has very little faith, and still less inspiration. As soon as I shall have any good news to send, you shall be informed of it immediately.

In the mean while, my dear marquis, I amuse myself with the popes Nicholas and Adrian, the emperor Louis, king Lotharius, and with the ladies Teutberge and Valrade †. I am on the point of beholding a great schism arise in the

* Saint Coachy!—*Fiacre*, in the French language, signifies both hackney coach and hackney coachman. Smollet, in Letter IV. of his Travels, informs us St. Fiacre was the son of a Scotch king, who lived and died a hermit in France; and that the troops of Henry V. of England were said to have pillaged the chapel of this Highland saint; who, in revenge, assisted his countrymen in the French service to defeat the English at Bauge; and afterward afflicted Henry with the piles, of which he died. This prince complained that he was not only plagued by the living Scots, but even persecuted by those who were dead. T.

† The king means, he was then reading de Fleury's Ecclesiastical History. T.

west, and am inclined to believe that the whole world has been foolish, from Constantine to Luther ; disputing, in an unintelligible jargon, concerning absurd visions ; and episcopacy establishing temporal power, aided by the credulity and the folly of princes and people. The consequences of the history of religion, considered under this point of view, present a grand prospect to the eye of the philosopher, and become an instructive lesson for all who are able to think, and to reflect on the human mind. The abbé de Fleury has really rendered truth and good sense great service, by composing his History. You would write a most admirable book, my dear marquis, as it appears to me, were you to amass all the contradictions and all the absurdities of divines ; though you would undertake a most enormous work.

I will take your word for it that you are as good a Greek as Demosthenes. You were before a formidable Grecian to me, who understand nothing more than the *Pater Hemon*. This was exceedingly apparent during the supper at which the duke de Nivernois was present, and when you supported one half of the conversation in Greek ; while I called for a dictionary, that I might, in some manner, be able to understand
the

the very learned words which you each of you threw in so a-propos.

For my part, I have not profited like you by this unhappy war : I am become a practical philosopher. I have beside forgotten the little I knew, and all I have learned is patiently to suffer ills which I cannot avoid.

Adieu, my divine marquis ; you might have kept the new works of D'Alembert, which in truth are equal in value to our current coin* . I beg you will take care of your health, and remember your friends, who are impelled and haunted by a malignant spirit over the world, according to the caprice of the goblin.

Vale.

LETTER XXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, April 20, 1759.

YOU have indulged me in the liberty of occasionally writing to you ; I dare not, however, take this freedom so often as I wish, from

* How much the Prussian coin was debased, at this period, is well known. T.

the fear that I should disturb your majesty in the important affairs concerning which you are incessantly occupied ; but the good fortune of your arms in Bohemia, and the happy commencement of the campaign, inspire me with too much joy to refrain from congratulating your majesty. I daily become more convinced that, at the close of this campaign, you will render your people contented and happy ; and, after being crowned with glory, will pass halcyon days at Potsdam and Sans-Souci, surrounded by the magnificent things you shall there perform and there collect.

I know you have difficulties to surmount which would astonish, and even incite despair in any other prince ; but the same fortitude and prudence, which have hitherto been your support, will lead you to a permanent and honourable peace. I regard you as the modern Hercules ; you are obliged to act wonders. You combat against a hydra, but in the end you will cut off all its heads. I am not blind to the present situation of affairs ; I know that they are in a very critical situation ; but in fine, sire, I judge of the future by the past, and I have no doubt but that a pleasing calm will soon succeed to storms so violent. I suppose the present league to resemble that of Cambray ; like which it
will

will be productive of no stable effect, and will end in smoke.

Your majesty is wrong to tell me that the misfortunes of others are but dreams. I have several times repeated to your majesty that my destiny is so much attached to your preservation that, had I the unhappiness to lose you, God knows what would become of me ! Certain it is I would rather travel into Jamaica, or Nova Scotia, than return to France. But a-propos of my most dear country ! You have lately put more than thirty women in mourning, whom you have made widows by an exchange of prisoners. In revenge, however, you have dried up the source of fifty false reports, which those gentlemen daily vented. Thus did they repay the civilities with which they were loaded.

I have received a letter from Voltaire, who had not written to me for these four years ; but he could not resist his desire to know what I think of the reverend father Malagrida, and the other Portuguese Jesuits. What says your majesty to these worthy people ? The adventure of the king of Portugal is a fine lesson for all sovereigns, and especially for protestant sovereigns. It is really horrid that a Pope should dare to support such infamous regicides ; and that a monarch, whom they have attempted cruelly to

affassinate, dare not drive the principal authors of an act so flagrant out of his kingdom.

This is a fine subject on which to write a sermon, in the character of a quaker, against all religions that maintain priests. Were I not still incommoded, and continually in pain with my leg, I should already have collected materials for a new pamphlet.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated,

I AM delighted to learn that you are safely harboured at Berlin. The journey to you was tremendous, and your campaign is over. I am in reality as impatient as you are to hear of the reduction of Cassel; and I begin to fear that, in despite of all the advantage of prince Ferdinand, he will make a scholar's progress, and will lose as fast as he acquires.

The French are as mute as fish, and say not a word to the English. The opening of the campaign approaches, and will probably be attended with

with the like disagreeable events and dangers as was the last. I own to you the thought renders me melancholy, and throws me into a reverie whenever it enters my mind. I often say to myself—We cannot resist the torrent of accidents which hurries us away, or that fatality which impels men, as winds agitate the sands and the waves. There is little consolation in the remembrance of this, but the die is cast.

I thank you for the description you have given me of Sans-Souci. God knows when I shall there set foot again! Yet what you have said affords me great pleasure. I remember the place as the Jews do Jerusalem, or as Moses did the holy land, toward which he wished to lead the people of Israel, but which he himself was doomed never to enter.

What shall I say to you, my dear marquis, concerning the king of Portugal? N*** has every where done evil; and will continue so to do, so long as sovereigns shall not, like Cæsar, be the pontiffs of their own dominions. These people abuse the name of religion with too much impunity; a name which ought to be the greatest curb to crimes. They arm themselves with the sacred knife, which they snatch from the altar to cut the throats of kings, and, with the piety of the weak, to found or to extend

their avaricious and their ambitious desires*. The conduct of the Pope, in this affair, is inconceivable. He must be an idiot, and his cardinal secretary a rascal, that ought to be broken alive.

But what have we to do with such people, at present? I am in greater pain for Cassel, and my detachments, than for all the Jesuits in the world. I have the difficult task which I have to fulfil incessantly before my eyes. All my arms are a great fund of good will and an inviolable attachment to the state. In fine, I plunge with my eyes shut into an ocean, agitated by contending winds, without knowing on what shore I shall be cast. This is the true state of what relates to myself, and of all that I can augur for the future. I endeavour to affect tranquillity, but I would have you judge whether philosophy can bestow such perfect apathy, on a man born with strong passions.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Write to me often. Give my compliments to the good Babet, and be persuaded of the esteem in which I shall hold you during life.

* To *found desires* is perhaps too bold a metaphor; though we do not scruple to say *build hopes*. T.

LETTER XXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, May 5, 1759.

I HAVE received the verses which your majesty did me the favour to send. How is it possible to be occupied by the command of an army, of a hundred thousand men, and yet find time to write verses so ingenious, and infinitely more correct than those of La Fare and Chaulieu? You perform every thing you please; and I believe that, should you take such a whim, you would, at the same time, lay down an admirable plan of battle, and write as fine a sermon as any written by Saurin.

I had seen, in all the public papers, an account of the toka * and the sword, sent by the Pope to marshal Daun. I wished to induce the gazette writer of Berlin to insert, in his paper, that prince Ferdinand expected from London a hat and a sword, consecrated by the archbishop of Canterbury; and that the protestants made no doubt but that the Canterbury benediction would be more efficacious than the Roman. It is necessary to load the Austrians and French with ridicule, for they publish a hundred

* *Toque*—Cap or bonnet. T.

follies.

follies, which make much impreſſion, and are allowed ſo to proceed.

Inſtead of the wretched ſermons which our miniſters write, why do they not take occaſion to compoſe a paſtoral letter, in which they ſhould demonſtrate the total ruin of proteſtantiſm, ſhould the enemies of your majeſty unfortunately ſucceed in their deſigns. I could eaſily write a pamphlet on this ſubject; but ſuch a work muſt be written in German, to be diſperſed among the lower ranks, that it might be generally read. I have only met with one piece, in favour of the good cauſe, which is written with taſte; and this is the Letter on Libels. I immediately diſcovered your majeſty's hand, and I can aſſure you that, at the fiftieth line, I was as certain that you were the author of that work as if you yourſelf had told me ſo. It is tranſlated into German, and is thus rendered more uſeful.

I have an inclination to publiſh a monthly work, under the title of *Mercure de Harbourg* *, in which, without inveſtive or bitterneſs, I would turn all the impertinences publiſhed by the enemy to ridicule. The work ſhould be printed in French and German. No perſon

* The Mercury of Harburg.

ſhould

should know me to be the author, the translator excepted; for the translator would be as necessary a person as the author, since the people must be informed; and those who speak French in Germany are but few, comparatively to those who understand only the German language.

Should your majesty not disapprove my project, I will begin as soon as I shall know your will. It appears to me that the plan might be useful, for the publication of some pieces which your majesty amuses yourself in writing, and which I should insert in the *Mercure de Harbourg*, as coming from authors under such names as it shall please your majesty to sign.

I am not astonished at the follies and impertinences of several French officers, for this I had foreseen; and your majesty may recollect I had the honour to ask you, at Breslau, why you had the complaisance to send a number of hair-brained youths to the capital? Thank Heaven, I was not acquainted with any one of them, during the residence they made in that city. May God keep them merry at Spandau. All I have to say to your majesty is that we no longer daily hear those rumours which had no foundation in truth, but which however did not fail, for two or three days, to alarm all the worthy people in Berlin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 17, 1759.

I NEVER read any thing so pleasant as your Pope's Brief, and your Letter from the prince de Soubise. I am persuaded the very enemies of your majesty must be obliged to confess they have never met with any thing more ingenious.

I have changed the plan of my work, and the title. I shall assume the following, which appears to me more interesting, and more conformable to my ideas—*Memoires de l'Academie des Nouvellistes du Café de St. James* *.—I feign that some Englishmen have formed a society, or club, in which each is obliged to read, to the members assembled, some political pieces. This will be the means of introducing, at each meeting of the pretended academy, whatever satires I shall please. The title of my work will furnish me likewise with an occasion of turning many things to ridicule; and I shall endeavour to write a book such as shall be interesting

* Memoirs of the Academy of the News-Mongers of St. James's Coffee-house.

enough

enough to be read when the war shall be ended, and the pleasure of novelty lost. In fine, sire, should you be pleased to aid, and give effect to my plan, by sending me what you shall write in your moments of leisure, I am convinced that my work will succeed. I suppose that, in seven or eight days, I shall be able to send your majesty the first part printed.

The Pope's Brief appears to me to be so pleasant that I shall translate it into Latin, and shall print it in two columns, the Latin on one side and the French on the other. This will impart the greater air of truth to it, because the briefs of the Pope are always written in Latin, when they are addressed to the Imperial court, or to its ministers.

At the moment that I have the honour to write to your majesty, a report is spread through the city that prince Henry has entered Nuremberg, and that your majesty has repulsed and beaten a heavy body of Austrians. I am persuaded, sire, you will do whatever is necessary in this campaign to vanquish your enemies, on all sides; and I doubt not but I shall have the happiness again to see you tranquil at Potsdam, at the close of the year, crowned with glory, and in the enjoyment of perfect health; for, according to my creed, the latter article is as necessary, to the
3 happiness

happinefs of heroes, as it is to the peace of us, poor, fimple, mortals.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Reich Hennerfdorff,
May 28, 1759.

I AM fo occupied, here, by our heroic follies, that I very much fear I fhall be able to afford you but feeble affiftance, in your praife-worthy project.

I have not beaten the enemy, becaufe I have had no opportunity. To perform my task will be very difficult. The enemy I have to face, fronting Silefia, is ninety thoufand ftrong; to oppofe whom I have but fifty thoufand men. Perplexity will begin to be felt as foon as the army fhall enter the field; and much addrefs, art, and valour are neceffary, to efcape the dangers by which we are menaced.

My brother has not fent troops to Nuremberg, for it would have been very erroneous in him to have marched thus far, under our prefent circumftances. He ought, on the contrary,
hafily

hastily to regain Saxony, that he may send a detachment against the Russians. We have yet no cause to sing *Te Deum*, nor can we presage the future. The great impediment, the gordian knot, awaits us ; and we must see what will be the will of fate, relative to future events. Be it what it may, it will not derange my philosophy.

With respect to my health and content of heart, these are things on which I do not think, and which are to me very indifferent. I perceive, my dear marquis, you like the public are misled. My situation may at a distance cast a certain splendour ; but approach, and you will find nothing but gross and thick smoke. I scarcely any longer know whether there be such a place as *Sans-Souci* in the world ; be it situated where it will, the term no longer is applicable to me *. In fine, my dear marquis, I am old, gloomy, and harassed. Some rays of my former good humour occasionally dart into my mind ; but they are sparks which expire, wanting the furnace whence more shall be emitted. They are flashes of lightning that burst through the black and stormy clouds. I tell you the truth. Were you to see me you would no longer find the traces of the man I formerly was. You would behold grey-headed age, that has lost half

* *Sans Souci* means *without care*. T.

his teeth ; is destitute of gaiety, fire, and imagination ; and is less than the Tusculan remains of which architects have formed so many imaginary plans, not finding any ruins which could indicate the foundation of the abode of Cicero.

Such, my dear marquis, are the effects rather of grief than of increasing years ; such are the mournful approaches of decay, which the autumn of life infallibly brings. These reflections, which render me exceedingly careless concerning death, inspire me with precisely those propensities which a man ought to have, who is fated to fight to the last extremity. With this indifference for life, we combat with greater courage, and quit the world without regret.

For your part, my dear marquis, not being in the paths of blood, preserve your good humour till some just cause for affliction shall assault you, and mortify our enemies with your pen ; while I will employ all the abilities I possess to confound them, by the sharp sword and the thundering cannon.

Adieu, dear marquis. May Heaven preserve you in peace, and take you into its holy keeping !

L E T T E R XXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, June 18, 1759.

I SHOULD have done myself the honour to write to your majesty sooner, could I have hastened the printers. But the delays of these people are eternal. I have for some days suspended my Memoirs of the Academy of Newsmongers, because I have supposed I might write something more effectual in a serious style. Here are two Letters, under the fictitious name of a minister of the gospel. In the first, I have attempted to prove that the object of the house of Austria, and of France, has at all times been to annihilate the reformation; and, in the second, have shewn that these two powers suppose the present to be the moment, for the execution of their plan.

Did I possess that ardent and persuasive eloquence which nature has so liberally bestowed upon you, I should have been able to have written something better; but, exclusive of the mediocrity of talents which has been granted me, the weakness of my body has communicated itself to my mind, and my understanding is almost as much enervated as my frame. I

have endeavoured to supply the defects of the orator by the expression of truth. I have had recourse to unadorned reason, not being able so to ornament it as to render it more convincing. This has occasioned the work to find favour in the eyes of its readers ; and, since the Letters have been more successful than I dared flatter myself they would have been, I intend to publish five or six more, should I have strength enough for their composition.

I have the honour to send your majesty the Pope's Brief, with a Latin translation. There is more Attic salt, and more imagination, in this piece, than in all that has been or will be published, during the course of the present war.

No one knows that I am the author of the Letters which I have the honour to send your majesty ; of this the printer himself is ignorant. M. de Beaufobre alone is in the secret, for he is charged with correcting the press. I entreat your majesty not to name me, for the world is persuaded they are really written by a minister of the gospel ; and we shall lose all the good effects that might be expected, should it be known they are the production of an author whose books have been burnt, in various countries, because of their irreligion.

I have great need to drink the mineral waters
of

of Sans-Souci, if you will be pleased to permit me to go there for a fortnight. I wish to new-line my poor case, which begins to be very much worn. The physicians assure me the waters and the exercise of the journey will do me much good. I here go out in a carriage, but they wish me to walk.

I have not yet published the Letter of the prince de Soubise, because I keep it for my Memoirs of the Newsmongers, which I shall begin to write as soon as I have composed two more Letters of the Gospel-minister.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR two Letters, my dear marquis, are of more worth than a victory. The plan is admirable. I only could wish you had been informed of an anecdote respecting the second; which is that France caused it to be declared, to the republic of Holland, that she really had an intention to invade England, but that the Pretender was not to have any part in the affair.

This little inadvertency may easily be corrected ; and it is only necessary to say that France would not name the Pretender, lest she should cast an odium on her entreprize ; yet was unable to make the attempt, except in his favour.

You laugh, my dear marquis, at me, and my Pope's Brief. To compare it to your Letters is to suppose one of Rousseau's epigrams equal to the *Eneid*. I know my own worth ; my frozen northern fancy cannot in any manner run parallel with your Provençal imagination. The frogs of Aix have more ardour of mind than my dear countrymen. We dare not pretend to it ; we are exceedingly happy if but twice in our lives we should be thought to possess a little good sense. You take wing and fly, while I hobble on crutches. Do not, from your sublime heights, insult my poverty ; and suffer me to crawl after you, along that road over which you hasten with such rapid speed.

I shall not betray your secret. You know the first prayer of politicians is addressed to the God of mystery. For my own part, wretch as I am, and obliged by duty to act as others, and not as I myself shall please, I have studied in that school the art of containing my tongue within the limits of my teeth, and consequently your gospel holiness has no need to fear I shall ever divulge the
author

author of Letters which the pious effects of your zeal for protestantism have produced.

I have some dozen of points to observe in my present situation, which so much occupy my mind that it is impossible for me to furnish any materials for irony. The premature campaign which Daun announced will be reduced to *semper augustus*; an epithet which in former wars was bestowed on the Austrian arms.

Go to Sans-Souci, my dear marquis. You know that my house, and all that fortune has left me, are very much at your service; and, in payment for your lodging, I desire you to write me word in what state you find my gallery, and whether the old gardens and the Chinese have made any remarkable progress, during the four years since last I saw them.

Adieu, my dear marquis; drink the waters; work and write in behalf of the good cause. Take care not to forget your old friends, accursed of God though they be, no doubt, since they are condemned to continual warfare.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, July 5, 1759.

YOUR approbation of my work originates in excessive indulgence ; my only merit is that of unaffected zeal, and your majesty is pleased to encourage me because you perceive I possess this zeal. I immediately corrected the mistake which you pointed out ; and in a new Letter, which I have the honour to send you, I have pursued the hint which you were pleased to give.

The first part of this third Letter I have employed to shew that France could have no other views than those of acting in favour of the Pretender, though she endeavoured to conceal them ; and in the second part I have refuted the arguments which I heard employed, at Hamburg, to convince the Germans and some Dutch merchants. I have particularly insisted on the absurdity that men should suffer themselves to be deceived, by the extravagant praises bestowed on the queen of Hungary, and the king of France ; because I have met with many people who were the dupes of these praises. I flatter myself

myself your majesty will find I have treated this subject with all possible moderation. I endeavour to assume an air of impartiality, which may be more convincing than too much ardour. It gives me pleasure to perceive that the Letters fell in the German language; for this may render them useful, and without this the utility would be very trifling. I am no more known to the translator than he is to me. Every body here is persuaded that the Letters are really written by a gospel-minister; or at least by some good protestant.

I thank your majesty for your kindness, in permitting me to drink the waters of Sans-Souci. I will not fail to write to your majesty immediately on my arrival, and to inform you of everything you wish to know. May I soon have the happiness to see you crowned with glory, and in the enjoyment of perfect tranquillity, in these beautiful abodes, which you still continue to embellish.

To the French Letters I add two copies of the two first in German, should your majesty, by chance, wish to have them read by some one who does not understand the French language.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXIX.

*From the Marquis d'Argens.**After the loss of the battles of Zulichau and Cunerfdorff.*

S I R E,

Berlin, August 14, 1759.

NOTHING has happened to you but what has happened to Cæsar, Turenne, and several times to the great Condé. If you will but recover possession of yourself, take care of your health, and employ those resources which your own intelligence will supply, every thing will soon be restored to order. My grief is extreme that I cannot be present with you, incessantly to repeat what I have now the honour to write. In the name of your people, in the name of your glory, which will ever remain immortal, in despite of the vexatious accidents which may happen to you, do not yield to emotions which injure your health, and are more destructive to your people than the loss of many battles. Recollect that Louis XIV. suffered the greatest reverse of fortune, by supporting which with firmness he acquired more grandeur than by having conquered numerous provinces. What is your intention? To defend your kingdom; and, should this kingdom be deprived of you, it will, without resource,

be eternally lost. Peace made on certain occasions is neither shameful nor prejudicial. Where is the prince, or hero, who has not sometimes been forced to yield to the torrent of accidents?

In fine, sire, you know I adore you. Should you perish, your people will eternally accuse you as the author of their misfortunes; should you live, let affairs take what turn they may, they will worship you; for you alone can save the state from the wretchedness into which it would fall, should you be cut off. Excuse, sire, the liberty I take, which is pardonable in a man who, had he a hundred lives, would give them all with pleasure, to render you happy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R X X X .

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August, 18, 1759.

I NEITHER have quitted nor have I thought of quitting Berlin. So long as I shall know you to be in good health, I shall not have the least fear, because I am assured that, notwithstanding the accidents that may happen, while you shall preserve your person, which is so precious

precious to the state, affairs, however vexatious they may appear, will soon or late take a fortunate turn. Think seriously therefore, sire, on what must happen should you perish. I dare not here retrace the fearful picture; but, if you do but live, affairs must assume a different face to that which they at present wear. The English now hold the guarantee of the countries of which your enemies think to rob you; and the general peace cannot but be favourable to you, in despite of the advantages which your enemies seem to gain.

I well know how sensibly you must feel their march into your provinces; but, since all Europe is convinced your fame cannot be diminished, you ought to console yourself; and, happen what will, to think of your own preservation, since on you alone depend the remedies that are to be applied to the present ills.

If your majesty will permit me the honour of coming to join you, I will depart with the first escort that shall leave Berlin, from which place escorts are almost daily marching, and will remain with you during the rest of the campaign. My health is passable, and I am able to ride on horseback; I therefore shall not be in the least troublesome to your majesty. I wait your answer.

Once more let me conjure you to be careful of yourself, and not too sensibly to feel that reverse of fortune which the greatest heroes have often encountered. Nothing can be more grand than the proscribed and fugitive Marius braving fate. Sertorius shut up in a corner of Spain, supporting the caprices of fortune with equal patience and resolution, appears to me the greatest of the Romans; and Cato in Utica is considered but as a feeble soul incapable of resisting adversity.

I hope, sire, all will go better than you imagine, that it will not be long before you recover the advantage you have so often possessed over your enemies. I found my hopes on my knowledge of the talents of your majesty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXXI.

From the King.

Undated.

I YESTERDAY wrote to you to come, which to-day I forbid. Daun is at Cotbus, and is on his march for Luben and Berlin. Fly these

these unfortunate countries. This intelligence obliges me to attack the Russians again, between here and Frankfort. You may well imagine it is a desperate resolution. I have no other resource to prevent being cut off from Berlin, on one side or on the other. I have ordered brandy to be distributed to the discouraged men, that I may by this means inspire them with more bravery; but I do not promise myself any success. My only consolation is the determination to die sword in hand.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Once again fly, and wait the event, that you may provide for your own safety, in case of misfortune. I thank you for the attachment which you testify; and you may be certain I shall preserve a grateful remembrance of it to my last sigh.

L E T T E R XXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August 21, 1759.

I AM in despair at not being with you; but, since such are your commands, I shall depart to the distance of some miles from Berlin,
and

and shall wait at Tangermunde for news of the victory which you will gain over your enemies. Your infantry neither wanted good-will nor valour; but the excessive heat on the day of battle exhausted their strength, of which nature has only granted a certain portion to men, who, be they as courageous as they will, never can rise superior to this same nature. I am convinced they will repair their fault on the first opportunity, and that you will again find them to be true Prussian soldiers. Though fortune have for once turned her back, she has not therefore forsaken you. As soon as you shall think of the preservation of yourself, affairs will soon recover a smiling face.

How ardently do I wish to be with you! I have a million of things to say to you; and would prove to you, in spite of your affliction, that your loss alone can incur that of the state. Live; take care of yourself; and, be the state of affairs what it may, it will soon or late become favourable. And even, sire, had the loss of a battle led the enemy to Berlin, which however did not happen, would there have been no longer any hope, because we must have paid a contribution? Recollect, sire, that prince Ferdinand may when he pleases enter Franconia, and lay waste those districts of the Empire which are
averse

averse to us ; by which means he would oblige a part of the Austrians to hasten toward Bohemia.

You have suffered loss, but the loss of your enemies is still greater. I know the sensibility of your majesty, and this is what I fear more than your foes. I own it is very vexatious that a king, who exposes his person more than his private men, should be abandoned by those very men ; but in fine, fire, they will act wonders on the first occasion. Every thing will be repaired ; and they will thus act, because I am convinced your majesty will bring them to a sense of their duty by the hope of reward, and the assurance of no more remembering the past.

I have answered M. Bernouilli, according to the commands your majesty has been pleased to give me.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Wolfenbuttle, September 9, 1759.

I MEAN to return to Berlin, there to wait your majesty's orders ; and am ever ready to go wherever you wish. I entreat you, sire, to pay no regard to my health ; were it weaker
than

than it is, it would acquire strength the first moment I should have the happiness to see you.

When I came to Tangermunde, the town was so full of strangers that it was impossible to find a lodging ; nor would I remain in the villages because of small parties from the army of the Empire, which hovered in the environs of Magdeburg and Halberstadt ; and I continued my route as far as Wolfenbuttle, where I now am, and which place I shall leave to-morrow.

I have never doubted but that your majesty would soon repair the check you met with, in the last battle ; and am convinced all will finally be well, and much better than you suppose, provided you will but preserve your person. In you alone concentrates the safety of the state.

Your majesty has no doubt seen the letter of marshal de Belleisle, which was found at Detmold, among the papers of marshal de Contades. Nothing can be more shocking than the project of renewing the horrors of the Palatinate in the electorate of Hanover, and to render it “ a desert before the month of September,” for such are the very words of M. de Belleisle. This man will become the bye word of all worthy people, let them be of what party they will.

I have no doubt but the king of England will hereafter think seriously of the affairs of
Germany ;

Germany; he knows at present what he is to expect from his enemies. What would become of his German provinces, should you unfortunately sink under your burthen? If this letter have discovered the inordinate spirit of revenge of the French ministry, it has also discovered the wretched state of their finances; since the marshal writes that, without the contributions which Fischer is to raise, it is impossible to provide for the immediate wants of the army. What then will be the consequence should the English strike some bold stroke, before the end of the year?

I have no doubt but you have still many labours and pains to support, before the close of the campaign. But, in order to bring things to a happy issue, you have not any need to vanquish, but to temporise. Defensive war is the ruin of your foes. The campaign must end in six weeks, and frost and snow will offer you rest. How can your enemies exist in a country where they have neither provisions nor magazines? What immense sums must the French procure, for the supplies of the next year; that they may continue the war, and pay the subsidies of their allies, who without these same subsidies cannot act!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIV.

From the King.

Cotbus, September 17, 1759.

BERLIN at length is out of danger. The Russians are at Guben and at Forst; but I still am surrounded by cruel perplexities, snares, and gulphs. It is very easy, my dear marquis, to say—"We must make defensive war;" but the number of my enemies is so great that I am of necessity obliged to act offensively. I am here in a triangle, with the Russians on my left, Daun on my right, and the Swedes in my rear—"Make defensive war, I conjure you."—The very contrary has happened: I have hitherto supported myself only by attacking, whenever I could find an opportunity, and by procuring small advantages, which it has been my endeavour to increase as much as possible.

I have, since the war, served an apprenticeship to Zenonism; and, should the same train continue, I shall become more indifferent, more passive, than Empedocles, or than Zeno himself.

No, my dear marquis, I do not require you to come and join me here. Should I live, I do not expect to see you till winter shall have form-

ed a good six months truce, before which period there is much blood still to be spilt, and many good and ill accidents which must inform us what is to be our destiny.

Adieu. I embrace you, my dear marquis.

L E T T E R XXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, Sept. 29, 1759.

I KNEW your majesty possessed all the qualities of Cæsar, but knew not that you added those of the great admiral de Coligni, who was more feared, more admired, and more formidable to his foes, after than before the loss of a battle. Your affairs are now entirely recovered, or nearly so. Your army yielded the palm of victory to your enemies; but your genius has deprived them of the fruits they might have expected to reap by their advantage.

While you are restoring affairs so as to put a fortunate end to the campaign, the English are hastening the approach of peace, by the destruction of the French fleet. No longer have the latter a single ship in the whole Mediterranean, and

and the English may there give law with a single squadron of three or four vessels.

The pretended invasion of England is vanished in smoke. Canada too must be lost; for I have no doubt but that Quebec is taken, at this very moment that I have the honour to write to your majesty. The Brest fleet dares not leave the harbour; the French are too sensible that, should it be beaten, their marine will be totally ruined and annihilated. All their colonies, in Africa and America, and every coast of the kingdom itself, are at the mercy of the English. Where can France apply for money to furnish the supplies, and those expences into which they have entered with so much profusion? The parliaments obstinately refuse to enregister the new taxes. In fine, the defeat of the fleet of De la Clue has cost five thousand sailors, taken or drowned; a loss which twenty years cannot repair.

When all these circumstances are considered, it is but natural to conclude that, should the English offer the French a peace in the least reasonable, the latter will accept it, and will forsake their allies, should they be unwilling to concur in promoting the general tranquillity. I am persuaded, sire, that the French have already renounced seizing on the electorate of Hanover;

for all the steps they now make are but vain ostentation. *The desert* of the marshal de Belleisle is a chimera, which the battle of Minden must have caused to vanish from the sight of the ministry of Versailles. Add to all this that frost and snow will be here in three weeks. Recollect the advantages which have been gained by prince Henry and general Finck, and your majesty will allow I have reason to affirm that the end of the campaign will soon afford the English a means of offering the French a peace, which, if it be not very unreasonable, they must, pleased or displeased, be obliged to accept. I have always thought, and still am firmly convinced, that the catastrophe of the monstrous league, which is formed against your majesty, will resemble that of Cambray.

In fine, fire, all will be well, provided you take care of your person, which is so precious to your people, and with the preservation of which both the safety of your subjects and the happiness of all Germany are connected.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 6, 1759.

A WOMAN who calls herself madam Tagliazuchi, and whom I never was acquainted with, wrote to me yesterday, and addressed herself to me, that I should inform your majesty she has things of the utmost consequence to reveal, and such as directly relate to yourself. I immediately sent for her, and she told me she was the wife of the poet who writes the operas. My first question was whether what she knew related to any conspiracy against your majesty; she answered no, but that what she had to declare was, however, of the utmost importance, though it did not relate to the sacred person of your majesty. I put many questions to her, but could not prevail upon her to answer any explicitly. Her continual reply was she would confide her secret to none but your majesty, or to some one to whom your majesty should, by letter to me, command her to address herself.

Though this woman endeavoured to make a mystery of the business, I think I have disco-

vered by the cross questions which I put to her, what her secret is; and these are my thoughts.

She is by birth a subject of the queen of Hungary, and is often in company here with foreign officers, especially Italians. Some one of these officers imagined her capable of maintaining a correspondence, and of sending intelligence to the court of Vienna. Whether the woman were at first seduced, and whether the fear of what might happen may have caused her to change her opinion; or whether she have acted only to deceive the court of Vienna, and to make a merit of her conduct to you; it is certain that she told me, during our conversation, that she had in her possession pieces of great importance. I have no doubt even but that she will deliver up the cyphers, with which she has been furnished, by the court of Vienna, through the medium of those who were commissioned to corrupt her; and these cyphers may be of utility to your majesty to decypher other letters.

I am led to believe she has cyphers, because, when I told her that she acted very prudently in remaining faithful to your majesty, for that her treachery would soon have been discovered had she entered into any correspondence with the court of Vienna, unless she had a cypher, she answered

answered that this would have been no difficulty, had she thought proper to fail in her duty.

In fine, should your majesty be pleased to name any person to whom this woman may address herself, you will soon be informed of the whole; I therefore entreat your majesty to send me orders how to act; for she presses me for an answer from your majesty, and assures me that what she has to discover is of great consequence, and will not admit of delay. Should it happen that all this is only the fumes of an Italian brain, which may be over-heated, and may have mistaken illusion for truth, as may very possibly be, for the woman appeared nothing less than prudent and calm, I still think that the trouble taken to know what she has to declare will be so trifling that it will not be regretted, even should it be discovered that she is but a lunatic.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 12, 1759.

I SHOULD have profited but little had I, after a residence of twenty years among the cool and sensible Germans, preserved a Provençal imagination. By the memorial which madam Tagliazuchi has remitted to me, your majesty will find what is the subject in question, and determine accordingly. Had you, sire, not written to me in express terms—"Let this woman say what she will, beware how you give credit to her assertions"—I should have desired the governor to arrest a person named Rannuzzi, till you should have sent orders what was further to be done with him, for this man indubitably appears to me to be a spy. But I satisfied myself with declaring to madam Tagliazuchi that, should this man leave Berlin before the arrival of your majesty's answer, she should be responsible; and she assured me she would detain him.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOU see, my dear marquis, that the secrets of madam Tagliazuchi were indeed of a trifling nature, as I had predicted. I have given commands, however, that this tremendous corrupter, this knave, should be arrested. To know my secrets it were necessary to corrupt me myself, which is no easy thing ; neither could the man give the enemy any intelligence except such as must be derived from muddy sources, rather proper to daub than brighten.

I am here in the same situation that I was a week ago ; but the enemy means soon to depart and is making every preparation for a march. This will put an end to my present campaign against the Russians ; but I have still a difficult task to perform. I am not well, but that shall not prevent me from faithfully performing my duties, while I have any strength remaining.

I am still at work on Charles XII. My composition will only be a chain of reflections, such as require to be written with care and with a mind at ease ; so that I proceed but slowly. I first conceived

conceived the idea by finding myself precisely on the spot which Shulenburg has rendered famous, by his retreat. With my mind incessantly occupied by military thoughts, I found I could better fix my attention on this than on any other subject.

The war ended, I will petition for a place among the invalids, for I am reduced to one of their number. Should you ever see me again, you will find me much older ; my hairs are grey, I lose my teeth, and I shall no doubt soon be in my dotage. We ought not to press too much upon the spring, the effort of resistance of which may totally destroy its elasticity. You know what is related of Blaise Pascal. You yourself have told me that you had so much exhausted yourself in Holland, by writing, that long rest was necessary to recover your powers. Your predecessor, Bayle, experienced the same thing. I, unworthy as I am to tie your shoe-strings, though this has not yet happened to me, feel my infirmities increase, my strength decay, and I progressively lose the ardor which is necessary for the task I have undertaken.

A long month is still to come before the campaign will be ended, and we must wait to see what winter will bring. In the mean time send me the *Revolutions of Rome and Sweden* by the abbé

abbé Vertot. Forget not your friends in purgatory, and rest persuaded of my esteem and friendship.

Adieu, marquis.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

SIRE,

Berlin, October 20, 1759.

WHEN I praise the conduct of your majesty truth dictates my discourse, nor has the courtier any part in what I say. Permit me therefore to repeat that nothing can be more fine than your last march into Silesia; and this, I am convinced, your very enemies will allow.

I am much afflicted to hear that you are indisposed, and, did I dare to request a particular favour from your majesty, it would be to relieve me from the cruel apprehensions under which I labour, and to send me news of your health. I hope you have only a cold, which is easily caught at this season of the year.

I impatiently wait to read your work on Charles XII. How can you affirm that your genius decays? The very manner in which you expresses

prefs yourself demonstrates it has lost nothing either of its strength or its charms. If you wish to be believed, you must determine neither to speak nor write.

Your letter I received on Saturday evening, and cannot obtain, from the bookseller Neaulme, the *Revolutions of Rome and Sweden* before Monday morning. They shall be sent without fail. I think the campaign exceedingly tedious, and wish for the happiness of throwing myself at your majesty's feet. I am inconsolable that you did not suffer me to go to Furstenwalde.

I hope the winter will bring peace. The French have once again been totally defeated in the East Indies, and have been obliged to abandon Fort St. David. Their most considerable places are taken, and their affairs are in as ruinous a state in the East as in the West Indies. This intelligence is certain, for it has been brought by three ships, which have arrived successively at London. Should England please, peace is indubitable.

Your majesty may say that the French may withdraw themselves from the alliance, and the other powers may continue the war. But who will pay the Barbarians? Who will afford subsidies to the enemies of Stralsund? Did ever the
house

house of Austria make war, except with the money of the Dutch and the English? Should the court of Vienna continue the war, the army of prince Ferdinand may penetrate to the gates of Vienna, having nothing more to fear from the French. What pleasure will the king of England then take in mortifying a queen who, forgetful of all her obligations to him, wished to aid an army that intended to make a desert of his electorate, and to favour a descent on England to the destruction of his throne and family! Attempts of such a nature never are forgotten, whatever route policy may take. I have continually been free enough to declare to your majesty that, should France quit this alliance, which she will for thirty years regret ever having contracted, the remainder of the league will soon be dissolved.

Your majesty may see, in the first letter I had the honour to write, relative to madam Tagliazuchi, that I regarded that woman as a lunatic, as a person of indifferent character. But it is nevertheless true that the said Ranuzzi, whom you have ordered to be arrested, was a spy sent by Daun, whose intention it was, on leaving Berlin, to go to your army; and that madam Tagliazuchi would have acted very properly had she turned him out of doors the moment she knew

knew his designs, without entering into so many parleys, which perhaps are not so innocent as the good lady pretends. In fine, I thank your majesty, for having rid me of all those artifices which began to fatigue my peaceful philosophy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XL.

From the King.

Undated.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear marquis, under the tortures of the gout; and remembered that the philosopher Posidonius, when Pompey passed through Athens, and sent to enquire whether he could listen to him without inconvenience, replied—"It never shall be said that a man so great as Pompey wishes to hear me, and that the gout was any impediment." The philosopher then made Pompey a fine discourse on the contempt of pain, while he occasionally exclaimed—"Oh Pain! Do what thou wilt, thou never shalt make me confess thou art an evil."—I imitate Posidonius, and now answer you, whose character

ter is of more worth than that of all the Pompeys collectively.

You enquire what is my disease, my dear marquis, and I reply, I am deprived of the use of my left arm, my two feet, and my right knee. My right hand, which is the only member I can at present make free use of, is employed in writing to you, and in desiring you to come to Glogau. I shall order myself to be carried tomorrow to * * *, which is half a mile distant from this place.

You may easily calculate, after combining the various misfortunes of war, disease, the loss of friends, and the inability of action where action is most necessary, that this assemblage of circumstances is not very pleasant. You have nothing to fear; the Russians go to Posen, and from thence to Thorn. The road hither is safe through Berlin, Frankfort, and Crossen; you may therefore travel as in times of perfect peace.

Adieu, my dear marquis; my great weakness will not suffer me to write more.

L E T T E R XLI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 28, 1759.

YOUR majesty's letter I received this Sunday morning, the 28th, and will not fail to depart the day after to-morrow, the 30th; I shall arrive at Glogau at the time that you will come there. However weak I may be, in this wintry weather, I would travel on foot over the whole earth to have the pleasure of seeing you. I fear lest you should order yourself to be carried too soon to Glogau. Should you happen to renew your cold, it may prolong your disease.

I am very sensible you must be vexed that you cannot in person finish the campaign; but you may give your commands for the execution of those things which you yourself would have done, had your health permitted. Beside, in a fortnight, if you are careful of your health, you will be able to support the motion of a carriage, and you may order yourself to be taken wherever you please. In fine, there are things which are above the strength of man, and the best remedy for which is to recollect that they cannot be avoided.

I

You

You must have received the news of the taking of Quebec two or three days since. Thus is all North America lost to France; and the English may, this winter, transport near ten thousand men to Europe, with more than thirty ships of war, and still leave sufficient to take Martinico in the month of March. Believe me, sire, you will this winter see the French abandon all their allies, and consequently we shall have peace in the spring, and shall go to Sans-Souci, to see the gallery which will be there, and which the inspector of the pictures, who came yesterday from Potsdam, this morning informed me will be the finest he has ever seen, though he has lived six years in Italy.

I send your majesty some verses, which it is said were affixed, during night, to the gate of the palace of Versailles.

*Bateaux plats à vendre,
Soldats à louer,
Généraux à pendre,
Ministres à rouer.
O France! Une femelle
Fit toujours ton dessein;
Ton bonheur vient d'une pucelle,
Et ton malheur d'une catin*.*

* Flat-bottomed boats to sell, soldiers to hire, generals to hang, ministers to draw and quarter. O France! It is thy fate to be governed by a woman; thou formerly derivedst happiness from a maid (of Orleans), for thy present misfortunes thou art indebted to a prostitute.

L E T T E R XLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, November 7, 1759.

SINCE the last letter I had the honour to write to your majesty, I have had another fit of fever; but, as it has not returned for these two days, I hope I am rid of it. I am happy to hear your majesty is recovered; but you must guard yourself against cold. I have no doubt but you will bring the campaign to a happy conclusion. May it restore you, in health and content, to your subjects!

My poor philosophy has once more been disturbed. Well may it be said that we ought carefully to avoid the company of lunatics. Madam Tagliazuchi, of whom I had heard no more since the man was arrested, has just written a letter to me, which I send to your majesty. Her impertinence is so great that, however much of the stoic I might be, I could not but feel it in some measure. I know not what the silly woman means to tell me, and am ignorant of all the tales and tricks of which she talks. Well might I inform your majesty, in the first letter I wrote concerning that woman, that her brain appeared to me to be disordered. I perfectly perceive what puts her out of temper.

I asked

I asked her, as I likewise asked M. Kircheisen, “ why she had delayed to inform against the “ man till the court of Vienna had required to “ know her name, and to be served gratis during three months.” This I believe to be the horrible language which she never can pardon. I shall be obliged to your majesty if you will be pleased to order M. Kercheisen to bid this Megara forget me, and suffer me to live at peace. Why did the mad woman think proper to address herself to me, who, during eighteen years that I have had the honour to be in your majesty’s service, have never been involved in such affairs? Your majesty will tell me that I ought to despise the discourse of such a woman: this I allow, but it is nevertheless disagreeable that I should be obliged, from street intelligence, in which I have no concern, to suffer the most atrocious and gross abuse. The devout bring all their griefs to the foot of the cross, and I depose mine in the bosom of philosophy; so that, though this woman should daily regale me by a similar epistle, I will no more trouble your majesty with such absurdities.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XLIII.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE caused myself to be dragged hither, my dear marquis; to-morrow I shall join the army, and I flatter myself that Daun and his Austrians will not discover that I have the gout. In a week I hope Saxony will be entirely swept of enemies, and that all will be tranquillity. Should you be well at that time, and can find any carriage hermetically sealed, you will give me pleasure by joining me at Dresden, where I shall fix my quarters, and will take care to provide you apartments.

I have so much to do, at present, that it is impossible for me to interfere in the clamours of your mad woman; wait till the campaign shall be closed, and we will then shut her up in whatever lunatic hospital you please.

Adieu, dear marquis, I embrace you.

L E T-

L E T T E R XLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, November 17, 1759.

I HAVE read your Reflections on Charles XII. with infinite pleasure; they are perfectly well written, the style is clear and sententious, and it has all the good qualities of that of Tacitus without its obscurity.

With respect to the thoughts, I shall satisfy myself with observing to your majesty that they brought conviction to my mind by their justness; that I discovered great generals alone are able to write on other great generals; and that all the productions of mere authors, relative to such uncommon men, however good the authors may be, will never be any thing but elegant phraseology. Good heaven! How wretched did the History of Charles XII. * appear to me while reading your Reflections! Each man should labour at his vocation. Nothing seems to me so

* By Voltaire. The marquis was writing to a monarch, and his style resembled that of most kingly correspondents. The Reflections of Frederic on Charles XII. are excellent; but to decry the work of Voltaire, so unjustly, was gross and contemptible flattery. T.

ridiculous as for a monk, shut up in his cell, to write a history of the campaigns of marshals de Luxembourg and de Turenne. Yet how many such military histories have we, which are the compositions of jesuits, benedictines, and fathers of the oratory ! I shall not fail, sire, to print your work with all possible attention ; and be assured there shall be no errors of the press. I have a wish to take off fifty copies, to seal up thirty in a packet, and to leave them at the castle, in the printing office, where you will find them on the return of peace. The work is admirable, and you will hereafter be glad to give some copies to your generals. I wait your orders on the subject. The first sheet, however, is in the hands of the compositor. I mean to print the work in quarto, that it may agree in size with your other historical works, and with your Poem on the Art of War.

Doubt not for a moment, sire, but that I will depart for Saxony as soon as you shall command me ; if I am ill, the journey will cure me ; and the pleasure of seeing you again, after so fine and glorious a campaign, will restore me to health.

I have a favour to request of your majesty, which is that I may bring the marchioness d'Argens with me. I have three years successively

cessively been attacked by a very serious fit of illness; this I hope will not happen during the present year, because of the regimen to which I subject myself. But had not your majesty had the goodness to suffer my wife to accompany me to Breslau, committed to the care of my servants, I should have gone and paid my respects to the Eternal Father; and I request you would be well persuaded that, without wishing to act the courtier, I should be better pleased to be with you, at Sans-Souci, than with him in his paradise. Oh Sans-Souci! Sans-Souci! Why can I not give my milliary fever to the R——, my diarrhea to the C——, and my indigestion to L——*? Could I do so, these three persons would think more of physic than of war.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XLV.

From the King.

Wilfsdorf.

THE pots and spoons of the French appear to me very pleasant resources to carry on a

* La R——, la C——, and L——; that is, as I conjecture, the Queen of Hungary, the Czarina, and Louis XV. T.

war; but this is a trick to dazzle the eyes of the public. I am persuaded the produce will be trifling. But as the printed Letters of marshal de Belleisle proclaim poverty, they have wished to impose on their enemies, and to persuade them that the wrought silver of the kingdom will be sufficient to make a vigorous campaign the ensuing year. Nothing certainly but this project could induce them to invent the comedy they are acting.

Munster is taken by the Hanoverians; and it is affirmed the French marched on the 25th for Geissen, to proceed to Friedberg, and to repass the Rhine.

For our parts, we are here, in face of the enemy, cantoned in villages; and the last truss of straw, and the last morsel of bread, must determine which of the two shall remain in Saxony. As the Austrians are extremely confined in their quarters, and can draw nothing out of Bohemia, I flatter myself they will be the first to depart. We must therefore have patience, and wait for the close of this infernal campaign. I have this year practised all my philosophy; nor has there been a day in which I have not been obliged to recur to the apathy of Zeno. This I confess is a very painful trade, when it is obliged to be continued. Epicurus is the philosopher of men,
Zeno

Zeno of the gods ; and I am but man. I have for these four years been in purgatory ; and, should there be another life, the Eternal Father must give me credit for all I have suffered in the present. Every rank, every condition, endure crosses and misfortunes ; I, therefore, must bear my burthen, heavy though it be, like others. I say to myself.—“ These things will pass away ;
 “ like as do our pleasures, our pains, and our
 “ happy moments.”

Adieu, dear marquis ; my letters must appear to you very gloomy ; but I solemnly declare I cannot write any other. When the mind is disturbed and chagrined we do not see the sun shine. I embrace you, and wish to see you soon.

L E T T E R XLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, November 25, 1759.

THOUGH persecuted by fortune, your own fortitude and abilities place you above her caprices. The example of the past assures me of the future ; nor can I for a moment doubt but that you have already, in part, repaired the misfortune

fortune which did not in the least originate with yourself. When we have acted according to the most determinate rules, we cannot, in any profession whatever, be answerable for accidents; and less in the trade of war than in any other.

I can well comprehend how much you must suffer; because, be our courage or genius what they may, we cannot rise superior to humanity. But great men like you have always overcome, by their constancy, what would have overwhelmed common souls.

The campaign must end: frost and snow will restore tranquillity for some months; and I hope the spring will give peace to Europe, when the French shall have done melting down their old spoons, which they send to the mint to obtain money. Do they mean to make war with their copper pots and pans? And is this the coin with which they will pay their Russian and Swedish subsidies?

Would the English but have sent, last summer, a fleet of fifteen ships into the Baltic, we should now have been at peace; and, if they will but send such a fleet early in the spring, we shall soon see an end to the war. The pretext they make of their trade with Russia is ridiculous, for the Russians would not dare to break with them. Where would the Russians have found

the gold and silver with which the English supply their mint? And, should the Russians have been restive, not a single ship would have arrived at Petersburg. I have much respect for the king of England; but he leaves the most common opinions in neglect, if he do not perceive that his electorate will be totally ruined, and that within the space of six weeks, should you unfortunately be overpowered by your enemies.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Freyberg,
December 16, 1759.

BY the edition you have sent me, I can perceive you have had the fever, for it is so incorrect that I return it to you corrected. Let it be reprinted, and throw the twenty copies into the fire. These people are so stupid that they have entirely changed my meaning, by the most evident blunders. Little Beaufobre might very well have paid greater attention. Had the Huns and Visigoths known the art of printing, they could not have done worse.

You

You speak to me of the French and their losses, which are sufficiently manifest, but peace does not therefore indubitably follow. My affairs are still in a bad situation. Succours are arriving to me at present; but the snow here is so deep, and the quantity which has fallen so considerable, that it is scarcely any longer possible to make the troops act against the enemy.

My situation is, that I am surrounded by difficulty, perplexity, and peril, on all sides. When to this I add the treachery of fortune, of which I have had so many proofs during the campaign, I dare not confide in her in any of my undertakings. Neither dare I trust my own forces. Nothing therefore but chance remains, and my only hope is in a succession of secondary causes.

When you have concluded your impression of the work, have the goodness to send me three copies. Count Finck will remit them to me, and the couriers will not refuse the packets he shall send.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I know not when my adventures will end, nor when I shall see you again: but I know beyond a doubt that I shall love you ever.

LET.

LETTER XLVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR edition, my dear marquis, is no better than my campaign; and, to speak without prejudice, they neither of them do much honour to Germany. Let us each of us correct our works, remembering that this is homage paid by us to posterity.

I have answered you before; and, what is still better, I have returned you the printed copy, revised and corrected after the original.

I more than ever hope the Austrians will soon take the road to Bohemia; and that, at length, in a few days we shall end the most unfortunate and the rudest campaign I ever in my life made. My nephew is advancing with a large detachment to my aid, and the enemy is making preparations which denote his approaching retreat.

I will say nothing to you of the martyrdom I have suffered, during a long month, nor of all the inconveniences with which this dreadful situation has been attended. I am so weary of complaining of fortune, that this very weariness induces me to pardon her.

Endeavour, my dear marquis, to procure me

the Encyclopedie, which I wish to buy for this winter. I will not say any thing to you concerning what will become of me during the winter, because upon my honour I do not know.

Adieu, dear marquis ; may health, peace, and content be yours.

L E T T E R XLIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, December 24, 1759.

A VERY grave personage has made his appearance here, beside whom Daniel, Jeremiah, Jofiah, and all the major and minor prophets, would be cyphers. The man has for these eighteen months been thought mad, because, in the year 1758, he predicted that in the year 1759 you would suffer great misfortunes. Within this fortnight, he has visited all those to whom he had announced his predictions, and has thus very seriously addressed them :

“ Gentlemen, you have supposed me a mad-
 “ man, because I foretold the truth. The event
 “ has justified all my predictions. Suppose me
 “ a madman once again, if so you think pro-
 “ per, for I assure you that the king will very
 “ soon rise superior to all his foes ; and that,
 “ from

“ from this time to the end of the war, he
“ will be attended with the most fortunate suc-
“ cesses.”

As the discourse of this singular man has been the conversation of the whole city, I was curious to enquire farther into the affair. M. Gottf-kowki, and other sensible persons, who were acquainted with him, say that he really did foretel, in 1758, that, in 1759, the Prussians would meet a great reverse of fortune; and that he had always added, what he has once more now repeated, that, in the year 1760, the Prussians would become more fortunate and more glorious than they had ever been.

With respect to myself, without the gift of prophecy, or the honour of heating my imagination, I am well persuaded you will repair all those evils which have been occasioned by errors in which you had no part; and which, humanly speaking, you neither could foresee nor avoid; for secondary causes are above all human prudence. You resemble those able architects who, by the great knowledge which they have in their art, can close and strengthen the apertures which have been made in buildings by unforeseen tempests, or earthquakes.

I have sent *Les Reflexions*, &c.* to the press

* Reflections on Charles XII.

again; and I flatter myself you will be better satisfied with the next edition than you are with the present.

Permit me however, fire, to defend your campaign against yourself; the misfortunes of which can never be imputed to you, because you were not the cause of them; and because they have happened independent of the precautions which you had taken. Your glory, fire, will not receive the least tinge.

I cannot affirm the same thing of the edition of the *Reflections*; not but it is very true that the manuscript copy led me into many mistakes. Of this I send some proofs to your majesty. The former manuscript reads, *On distingue ceux* *; the new correction reads, *On ne fait attention qu'a ceux* †. Another correction reads, *Un vast champ aux remarques* ‡; in the old manuscript the word *remarques* is effaced. In the corrected copy I find, *Je crains bien que ce beau phénix* §; the former manuscript reads, *Je crois que ce phénix* ||.

I might send many other passages to your

* Those are distinguished.

† Attention is only paid to those.

‡ A vast field for observation.

§ I much fear lest this fine phenix.

|| I believe that this phenix.

majesty, but this would be only to weary you. Beside, I must allow there are two or three mistakes, and, among others, one sufficiently stupid, of which I am guilty ; yet I three times corrected it, and these cursed printers preserved it in taking off the last proof.

I have given orders for a copy of the *Encyclopedie* from Holland ; for the booksellers only sell this book when they receive orders, it being too dear for them to keep it in their shops. I find, sire, it is your intention this winter to traverse an immense sea of ill-written articles ; among which float some excellent mathematical dissertations, by D'Alembert ; and some metaphysical balloons, inflated with wind, which, by occasioning the work to be prohibited, gave it a degree of reputation which it has already lost, in every country where no such prohibition has been issued. The last articles which Voltaire has inserted in the work denote old age, and are not much better than his *Candide*. Wit is frequent, but judgment and profound thinking are scarce ; this you will yourself perceive, and judge of better than I can.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R L.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, January 8, 1760.

I HAVE the honour to wish your majesty a happy new year, which shall restore you glorious, satisfied, and in perfect health to your subjects. I return you infinite thanks for the marks of bounty which you have deigned to bestow upon me, and entreat you to remain persuaded I shall preserve the remembrance of them to my last hour.

I send your majesty four copies of the new edition of Charles XII; to which I add the copy which your majesty returned, corrected, of the first edition, that you may perceive not a single mistake has been committed in the second. I entreat you would be persuaded, that those which were in the first did not originate with me. I was ill of a fever, and was obliged to trust the last proofs to the printer; but I have four several times revised the new proofs, nor do I think an Elzevir edition could be more correct.

Your verses on the prophets are charming; but in vain do you complain of fortune, for I perceive

perceive she is still faithful to you, though she occasionally pretends to have forsaken you. I own the affair of Maxen is vexatious; but recollect that it happened on the 20th of the month, and that on the 21st of the same month admiral Howe * destroyed the French fleet, the allies took Munster on the 22d, and the prince your nephew, on the 25th, beat the duke of Wirtemberg.

I have a thousand and a thousand things to say; but I write in haste, because I am oppressed by a violent cold, which for a fortnight past has not left me a moment in peace, and which has brought on a cough that sometimes makes me spit blood, and even in considerable quantities. It is said to be the pleasure and the consolation of the damned to find companions in their misfortunes. Were I a fiend, I should have much consolation in my affliction; for the disease is epidemical in Berlin, and as common as the hooping cough was about two-and-twenty years ago. At that time I was a soldier. Why am I at present nothing better than a miserable

* Not Howe, but Hawke; and the action at Maxen, and the battle with Conflans, were both on the 20th. Prince Ferdinand sent troops under the hereditary prince against the duke of Wirtemberg on the 25th, but the attack did not take place till the 28th and the following days. T.

burthen on mankind, when I wish to possess a hundred lives, that I might sacrifice them all in your majesty's service?

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

January 15, 1760.

I THANK you for the trouble which you have taken in printing my nonsense, for it was more than it deserved. You are too indulgent to the verses which I sent you. How was it possible they should be good? My mind is too restless, too much agitated, too much oppressed, for my fancy to produce any thing passable. This gloomy varnish is spread over all my writings and all my actions.

Nothing can be more uncertain than peace. It is hoped for, and supposed possible, but that is all. I can do nothing more than continue to wrestle with adversity; but I can neither bring fortune back to our side nor diminish the number of my foes. These things being thus, my situation continues the same; one more misfortune, and all will be over.

Life

Life becomes truly insupportable, when it must be dragged on amid chagrin and mortal affliction. Ceasing to be a heavenly benefit, it is an object of horror, resembling the most cruel torments which tyrants inflict upon the wretched. You may sooner kill me, my dear marquis, than induce me to change this opinion. You see objects in a point of view which softens and enfeebles them; but, were you only an hour here, how would the prospect change!

Adieu! Do not fatigue your mind with useless cares; and, without foreboding the future, preserve your tranquillity as perfectly as you can. You are not a king; you have not a kingdom to defend; you have not to negotiate, to find expedients for every want, nor to answer for every event. For my part, sinking as I do under the load, it is for me singly to suffer these pains. Leave me therefore, my dear marquis, to suffer without partaking them. I embrace you, and assure you of my esteem. *Vale.*

L E T T E R LII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

YOU will make what use you think proper of my work. I am so confounded by the misfortune that has happened to general Finck, that I cannot yet recover from my astonishment. It has deranged all my plans, and cuts me to the very soul. These misfortunes which persecute my old age have followed me from Brandenburg into Saxony; I will struggle with them as long as I am able.

The short hymn which I sent you, addressed to Fortune, was written too hastily; we must not sing *Te Deum* till we first have conquered. I am so weary of cross accidents, and the disasters that daily happen, that I a thousand times wish for death, and am more and more tired of inhabiting a worn-out body condemned to suffer.

I write to you in the first moment of grief; my soul is torn by mingled astonishment, chagrin, and indignation. Let us see what will be the end of this execrable campaign, and I will then inform you what is to become of me. We
will

will arrange the rest. Pity my situation, but say nothing concerning it, for bad news spreads fast enough of itself.

Adieu, dear marquis. *Quando avrai fine il mio tormento* * ?

L E T T E R LIII.

From the King.

Undated.

WHEN I wrote to you last, I forgot, my dear marquis, to desire you to send a copy of my Charles XII. to my brother Ferdinand, and another to general Seidlitz, who is wounded, and is gone to Berlin to be cured. This small mark of attention will, perhaps, give them pleasure.

My situation is not changed in the least, and I continue as much alarmed for the future as have hitherto been. Send me the lyes of your prophet, and the tales which you happen to hear, for my amusement. Would to heaven that the

* *When shall my torments end ?*——The contents of this Letter shew that it was written immediately after the affair of Maxen ; it consequently should have been inserted more early, but I do not exactly know where. T.

talked-of peace might soon afford us more permanent hopes than any we have hitherto had; and that we might see our pains and labour ended by a durable and advantageous treaty.

Adieu, dear marquis. I embrace you, and offer up a thousand prayers for your happiness,

L E T T E R LIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, January 24, 1760.

I IMMEDIATELY sent the copies to prince Ferdinand and to general Seidlitz, according to your commands, nor can I express how sensible his royal highness was of your majesty's present. His health is much better; and his disease is only the remains of weak nerves, which will be completely re-established as soon as the weather shall be better.

My prophet, at whom you laugh, continues to predict mountains and miracles, for the present year. I know not whether he be a false prophet, but I am certain he does not want wit. Of this your majesty may judge by two answers which he has made, within a few days; the one to a divine, and the other to a prince. The
name

name of the theologian is M. Suffmilch, a pastor, and a rigid Lutheran.

“ You do not understand either the Greek or
 “ the Latin,” said he to my prophet; “ how
 “ therefore can you judge of what the Greek
 “ Bible contains, from the German translation?”
 —“ Sir,” answered the Daniel of Berlin, “ do
 “ you mean to say that the German translation
 “ does not give the sense of the scripture? If so,
 “ how dare you offer it to Christians as contain-
 “ ing the pure word of God? You either must
 “ allow that I may understand the true sense of
 “ the Bible, by reading a translation which has
 “ been approved by all the synods, or you must
 “ confess that the Lutheran pastors universally
 “ deceive the people, of whom they call them-
 “ selves the guides.”

I now come to the answer given by the prophet to a prince; that is to the margrave of Schwedt, who asked the man whether it were true that he undertook to prophesy. “ I have
 “ been fortunate enough,” answered he, “ to
 “ tell some truths.”—“ Go, go,” said the margrave, “ you are a madman.”—“ So my wife,” replied the prophet, “ who is a very silly woman,
 “ every day tells me; but I pay no attention to
 “ what she says, because I know the extent of
 “ her understanding.”

I know

I know not whether Daniel, Jeremiah, Habacuc, and all the prophets collectively, could have made a more artful answer. Your majesty perhaps will tell me that my prophet deserved the bastinado; to this I can say nothing, except that it is possible for a man to merit the bastinado by giving an ingenious but an impertinent answer.

Your majesty from this will begin to believe I am half converted, and that I shall soon have faith in the ancient prophets, since I have credence in the modern. But I take some pleasure in informing your majesty that I am still a good and faithful follower of Epicurus; not however that I can refuse proof positive; and the following fact I have from the mouth of a Lutheran minister, a man of understanding, and a member of our Academy of Sciences.

A month before the battle of Custrin, my prophet went to this minister and told him—"Sir, "I come to inform you that, in thirty days, "the king will gain a bloody victory over the "Russians; near fifteen thousand will be killed, "and their bodies will long remain on the field "of battle, as food to birds of prey."—The very day this man predicted was precisely the day of battle. I well know that it was chance which verified the predictions of the man, but we must

still be obliged to own it was a very singular chance. Could I but be assured that chance would be as favourable to me, I would turn prophet myself. This would enrage Voltaire, and he would no more venture to laugh at people who inflame their imaginations.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LV,

From the King.

Undated.

IT seems to me that your prophet attempts to act the wit. He certainly must be a great genius, who is opening a new career to himself; for never, marquis, did Isaiah, Habacuc, or Jeremiah, among the vanquished and contrite Jews, possess the mania of endeavouring to pass for wits.

Misfortune inspires fear, and fear superstition; I therefore do not wonder that people who announce futurity, with all assurance and effrontery, should find others credulous enough to have faith in their predictions. One fool always finds another more foolish for his admirer.

I wish we could laugh more at our ease at such nonsense : but I no longer have any inclination to laugh ; I am struck by too many misfortunes, and surrounded by too many difficulties, amid which there are but little hopes I should be in a merry mood.

I send you an ode, which I have written for my nephew. The thing extraordinary in it is that it is not full of fabulous assertions, but that it is too modest for the person who is the hero of the composition.

I have had a swelled face, which has put me to great torments. I have been attacked by every scourge of heaven ; yet I continue to breathe, and to behold the light of day, which I a hundred times have wished were to me eternally extinct. In fine, every man must submit to his fate. May yours be a happy destiny ; and may you not forget the friend who is actually in purgatory, but who loves and will continue ever to love you.

Adieu.

L E T.

L E T T E R LVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 4, 1760.

I HAVE five times read your Ode to the prince your nephew. The work is truly worthy of you, and of the prince. It is the greatest eulogium that can be made, and at the same time the most true. After the most rigid examination, I have only yet been able to discover a single line which appeared to me to be rather prosaic, and is the following:

*Je puis au moins prévoir par mes heureux présages *.*

The line seems a little harsh on the ear; and the words *puis*, *prévoir*, and *présages*, in succession, are not so harmonious as the remainder of this beautiful ode, by which Rousseau would be honoured, and which I once again repeat is truly worthy of the hero by whom it has been written, and the hero to whom it is addressed.

You laugh at my prophet, but I have something else than prophecy now to inform you of.

One of our academicians, M. Gleditsch, maintains that M. de Maupertuis appeared to

* By happy presage I may at least foresee.

him,

him, in the academy hall, beside the clock, and that he saw him for the continuance of almost a quarter of an hour. This has excited an astonishing clamour. Remain incredulous now if you can! With respect to myself, I have determined to order two masses to be said for the repose of the president's soul, in order that, should he think proper to act the part of a goblin, he may leave me to sleep in peace, and go to Geneva, there like an incubus to sit upon, suck the breath of, and torment, the sieur Arouet de Voltaire.

I still am persuaded, notwithstanding the afflicting accidents of last year, that you will be fortunate in your next campaign; and, say what you will, you will never be able to convince me of the contrary, especially should it be true, as is here affirmed, that the English will send a fleet into the Baltic. Fortune, I allow, has for some time seemed to be unfavourable to you; but, without any faith in prophets, or in ghosts, I cannot but yield to certain pre-sentiments which tell me you will be successful in opposing your adversaries, and that at last you will acquire an entire ascendancy over them. Previous to the battles of Rosbach and Lissa, I wrote the same thing. The situation of affairs then was very different from what they are at present;

present; my security seemed to be still more ill placed, but was soon justified by time.

The prince of Bevern has written a letter to me in favour of a French gentleman who has been recommended to him, and with whose family I am well acquainted. Some years since I knew the person himself, when I was in France. An affair of honour obliged him to leave the kingdom, and to retire to Nice. His family having written to me in recommendation of him, he came to visit me at Menton; since which, not being able to return to France, he went, at the beginning of the war, to Canada, where he served with distinction. Finding nothing more to do in that country, and not being allowed to remain in France, he has determined to enter some foreign service. There are three things for which I can be answerable to your majesty; the first is that he has much valour, the second that he possesses probity, and the third that he is of one of the best families, I will not say of his province, but of the whole kingdom.

With respect to common sense, that is an article for which I will never pledge myself in favour of a Frenchman, especially a native of Provence. He understands Italian well, and the German tolerably; at least he can explain himself sufficiently to be understood in the latter language.

language. He wishes he might enter a free battalion. His age is about thirty-two, and his person engaging. When he left France, he was a lieutenant in the regiment of Champagne; in Canada he was made a captain, and has often had the honour to see men roasted and eaten by the savages. Should your majesty think proper to give him a lieutenant's commission he will be well satisfied; and, as he is not in any want, he will immediately purchase all necessary equipage for the lieutenant of a free-battalion.

I have once more the honour to inform your majesty that I will be answerable for the birth, probity, and bravery of the man I propose. I entreat you to do me the favour to write a word in reply, that I may not induce this young man to spend his money to no purpose.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YES, my dear marquis, I have committed mistakes, and what is worse shall again commit. All are not wise who wish so to be. We remain
 3 during

during life nearly such as we were born. The most vexatious thing, under our present circumstances, is that every mistake becomes a capital fault; and this single idea makes me shudder.

Figure to yourself the number of our enemies, irritated by my resistance; remember their pernicious and redoubled efforts, and the enraged obstinacy with which they wish to overwhelm me. Behold the destiny of the kingdom depending on a hair. Full of such ideas, the fine hopes with which your prophet inspires you vanish like smoke, driven by the wind, and dispersed in an instant.

To relieve myself from images so afflicting and gloomy, which would at length render Democritus himself melancholic and hypochondriac, I study, or write bad poetry. The labour, while it lasts, makes me happy; I forget my present situation, and procure myself what physicians call lucid intervals: but, as soon as the charm is dispelled, I again fall into my mournful reveries; and my disease, which had only been suspended, recovers additional strength.

Let me tell you, your Iroquois has full powers; he may, from this day forward, without the charge of homicide, kill as many Austrians as he shall please.

You pay me compliments on my verses which they certainly do not merit. My mind is not sufficiently tranquil, nor have I time enough to correct them. They are but sketches, or rather abortions, which the poetic demon obliges me to bring forth, which you from indulgence make welcome, and which appear to you less defective when you recollect the dreadful situation in which I am.

Write to me when you have nothing better to do; and do not forget the poor philosopher who, perhaps, to expiate his incredulity, is condemned to find his purgatory in this world.

Adieu, my dear marquis; peace, health, and content be with you.

L E T T E R LVIII.

From the Marquis D'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 7, 1760.

MY prophet is far from being silent respecting futurity; he continues to affirm that we shall be as fortunate this year as we were unfortunate the last. He offers to be punished as an impostor, and to be imprisoned as a madman, should he be deceived in his predictions.

Without

Without the honour of prophecy, I am, for my own part, convinced our affairs will be prosperous. You are diffident of fortune, nor can I blame you for this; she has been but little favourable to you during the last campaign. But I am encouraged, because I perceive, when she has seemed to have entirely forsaken you, she has suddenly furnished the means to repair the losses she had occasioned.

We have reason to fear for the *public cause*, when the fatal events which happen originate in those who are entrusted with the defence of this *public cause*; but, in all our past misfortunes, I can only find individuals to blame, and not either the army or the sovereign. The battle of Frankfort with the Russians would never have taken place, had the Prussian army, when it entered Poland, been differently conducted. The Prussian soldiers laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners at Maxen; but it is not the Prussian soldiers who make capitulations, but their commanders. The tenth legion would have surrendered themselves prisoners, had the chiefs of that legion, Cæsar being absent, thought proper to surrender.

An article of intelligence is asserted at Berlin as indubitable truth, which is that you are to command the grand army against the Austrians,

prince Henry the army against the Russians, and general Fouquet the detached corps. I have not, sire, the secret of heating my imagination, so as to read the mysteries of the gods; but, on this simple disposition of the forces and armies of your majesty, I will lose my head, if you do not rise superior to all your enemies. Your greatest difficulties, sire, during the course of the war, have been to repair mistakes in which you have had no part; and you are going to employ generals who never have been guilty of mistakes.

All the gazettes affirm that the English will send a fleet into the Baltic. Should they do so, this will be one of the best things they have executed during the war; and, should they be prevented from acting thus sensibly by any narrow, wretched views of trade, they will deserve to lose the esteem they have acquired, by the great actions they have performed during two years.

Your majesty has too much complaisance to pay the least attention to the feeble remarks which I have ventured to communicate. The alterations you have made appear to me excellent, and have rendered the Epistle peculiarly correct. The verses which your majesty has written, during the war, have all the harmony and sweetness of those which the muses dictate in times of the most profound peace.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R LIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 16, 1760.

WERE it true that I address you like a courtier, I should have been pleased so to have done, for I then should have given occasion to the beautiful, *the very beautiful*, lines which you have done me the honour to send me. You will repeat that I seek to flatter you; and I shall reply that I rather choose to be accused of flattery than suffer my conscience to reproach me with deceit. I take the liberty to speak what I think to your majesty, and my tongue is the interpreter of my heart.

You believe you have been guilty of mistakes; and I, on the contrary, that you have repaired the mistakes of others. The well-judging part of the public are now on my side, and posterity will hereafter decide whether you or I have reason. I am convinced posterity will admire your majesty, and will undertake to defend you against yourself. But this is a subject on which we should never end, and which we will one day discuss in peace at Sans-Souci; a day which perhaps will arrive sooner than you hope. How

many unforeseen accidents may happen, that may bestow that peace on Europe which is so necessary to her, and for which she waits with so much impatience !

It is your majesty's commands that I should write all the nonsense I hear.

Your cook Champion will never make you any more ragouts, either too salt or too much peppered ; the surgeons have entirely deprived him of what the first man employed for the propagation of the human race, and he expired on the third day. It is reported, through the city, that the surgeon who performed the operation, and who is a kind of madman (his name is Coste) put what he cut away between two plates, and sent it to a woman named Le Gras, whom Champion kept. This wretched joke has excited the babbling of all the women and all the devout.

I have only to add that your majesty will suffer very little loss by the death of Champion. Now he is no more I may speak freely, without fear of injuring him to your majesty. He was a man of very indifferent character, and behaved exceedingly ill during the time that the French and Austrian officers were at Berlin. He had taken them to board, and daily held discourse in their presence for which he merited to be sent

to

to the wheel-barrow *. His conversation was reported to me, and I gave him notice that I should acquaint the governor with his conduct. He promised he would reform, and I believed he had kept his word with me ; but I have heard, from those who told me of his death, that he continued his former conduct. You perceive, fire, that Heaven has punished him with more severity than your judges would have done ; for they certainly would not have condemned him to castration. Deny Providence hereafter, if you can. Such examples are very striking, and of much greater weight than those on which divines found so many bad arguments.

How well, fire, do you describe those ignorant fanatics in the charming verses which you have written on the Dictionary of the pretended atheists!

I have no doubt but the edition of your majesty's works has been printed from a copy purloined from those which are at Paris because the Dutch edition is but a copy of that which is published at Paris. There are several copies of the Dutch edition at Berlin, and which, as I am informed, only contain some odes, several epistles, and the poem on war. All the poems inserted are very beautiful ; and, to speak with-

* To work at the fortifications, a punishment common in Prussia. T.

out reserve to your majesty, I am not vexed at the theft, I only despise the thief, since the book will become the delight of all thinking people; and will serve as the elements of good sense to those who wish to learn to think.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LX.

From the King.

Undated.

I OWN to you, my dear marquis, I am exceedingly vexed to appear before the public in the character of a poet, for these people are all in bad repute; the least unfavourable opinion the world has of them is that they are madmen. With respect to the Atheists Dictionary, it is highly ridiculous.

I was rather vexed to find that the colleague bestowed upon us was the knave La Beaumelle. This wretch never thought*; and he is among the number of those who from weakness are the disgrace of philosophy; like fugitives whose

* The book by which La Beaumelle was first known was *Mes Pensées*; or, *My Thoughts*. T.

cowardice induces them to desert their arms. One of the most successful tricks, among theologians, is that of confounding libertines with philosophers. The former, who rather yield to the impetuous fallies of their temper than to their reason, often fall from one kind of excess into another, and from infidels become bigots. This is the triumph of divines; and the arguments they derive from the conduct of such men, who have not any conduct, furnish them with their best weapons.

But I have men very different from theologians to face; I must have recourse to the most artful industry, and the most excellent stratagem, to make head against those political fiends that pitilessly torment me. These ideas absorb every other; like as a violent disease renders us insensible to inferior pain. In fine, my dear marquis, I am good for nothing, except to fight, since such is my unfortunate destiny.

Write to me continually, and be persuaded of my friendship. Farewel.

LET-

L E T T E R LXI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE received my printed follies, such as they have been published in France. I have discovered many passages which are not suitable to politics; these I have altered to the best of my power, and shall send a corrected volume to Neaulme, that he may commit it to the press. I beg you will bid the little Beaufobre take care that the edition may be correct, otherwise we may have to begin again eternally. You may be certain that it was an act of malice to print the work, an intent to aggravate Russia, and perhaps the king of England, against me; for which reason it is exceedingly necessary the edition of Neaulme should appear, and bring the others into discredit.

I am unhappy and old; and this, my dear marquis, is the reason why they persecute me. God knows what events await me during the present year. I fear I shall resemble the unfortunate Cassandra in my prophecies; yet who could augur well from the desperate situation in which we are, and which cannot but become
more

more desperate ? I am so much out of temper to-day that it is impossible I should write more.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

P. S. I hope to send the book in question away to-morrow, and Neaulme must be expeditious.

L E T T E R LXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, March 28, 1760.

I HAVE received your majesty's letter at midnight, and sit down to answer it immediately. Two sheets of the edition are already printed. Finding that Neaulme would never have finished, I sent word to Vofs, by M. de Beaufobre, that he might begin to print two sheets, on condition that, if your majesty did not think proper he should continue, the loss should be entirely his own. The work will be completed in twelve days. Four presses are employed. M. de Beaufobre corrects night and day ; for the printers work without ceasing.

I well perceived the necessity there was of haste ; and this occasioned me immediately to send the bookseller's preface, which I have ordered to be printed. I have sent away thirty copies of this

preface to M. von Kniphaufen, at London; and the bookseller Vofs has expedited more than five hundred for that city, and sixty for Petersburg, by way of Dantzic. Thus we shall, at least for a time, prepossess the public, and afford leisure to make a new edition. This edition will be finished in twelve days; nor do I think that the aid of fairies themselves could make it proceed with greater haste. It will nevertheless be very correct, because it is much more easy for the printers to work from printed than from manuscript copy. Encumbered as your majesty is by so many other affairs, I entreat you would make yourself easy on this subject; and depend on the diligence and zeal of M. de Beaufobre, whose desire to serve your majesty is great.

The formidable Thurot is killed, and his whole squadron taken. Should not the French conclude peace at the beginning of this campaign, they must certainly be possessed by ten legions of Austrian devils.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXIII.

From the King.

Undated.

THIS is what may be called a letter; here is something here to answer, and I return thanks to your rheumatism for having procured it me.

You see all hopes of peace are vanished, and that our enemies are making the greatest preparations. In three weeks, I shall have two hundred and twenty thousand men to encounter. I scarcely have half the number; so that it is easy to comprehend that I must be necessarily ruined on that side where I am weakest, and where I can afford no opposition to the numbers that overwhelm me. I have therefore only one resource, which is itself uncertain. Should this fail, I can but wait for what all circumstances forebode, and which the plainest reasoning proves.

I am regularly bewildered three or four times each day, and exhaust my brain in search of expedients that never can be effectual. The French I believe are under the power of witchcraft, and nothing can be done with them. I

can preface no good from their conduct, which is weak, pitiable, and unworthy of a great monarchy.

The English fleets will immediately put to sea. Martinico, Montreal, and perhaps Pondicherry, will be the places which they will attack; and the French will learn how much mischief is done them by the * * * who govern them. I send you a short letter to La Pompadour*, which I wrote last year, and which threw her into despair.

* * * * *

Never certainly was my existence, or that of the state, in such great danger as at present; and you are too well acquainted with my manner of thinking to flatter yourself that I will survive my nation, or endure all the opprobrium and indignity to which I shall be exposed, on the part of my enemies.

I have seen the list of the pictures, with which I for a moment amused myself; but, in order to complete the collection, a beautiful Corregio, another fine picture by Giulio Romano, and an Italian Giordano, are necessary.

But whither do my thoughts wander? I know

* The king continually called this lady *La Pompadour*, in contempt. T.

not what misfortunes are now awaiting me, yet do I declaim on pictures and collections. Time which flies, Marquis, disgusts us with our most pleasing trifles; and affairs are in so hazardous a situation that we are no longer allowed to think on them; unless indeed some favourable accident should emit a ray of sunshine, to enlighten the darkness in which we stray.

Have no fears for your service *. A motto taken from Aristotle is affixed to it — “Doubt is the first step toward wisdom.” I flatter myself you will not disapprove the maxim. I believe the work will be finished in a fortnight, when it will be immediately sent you.

Adieu, my dear marquis; when time shall come, let masses be said for my soul. I really imagine myself with my eyes open in purgatory.

L E T T E R LXIV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

I HAVE a little commission to send you. Gottskowsky, as you know, has still some fine

* Of china, I imagine. T.

pictures,

pictures, which he designs for me. Let me request you to learn the price, and ask him whether he have the Corregio which he has promised me. It is a mere matter of curiosity. I know not either what will become of me or what will be the fate of the campaign, which I think to be so hazardous ; yet, madman as I am, I concern myself with pictures. Such is man ; he has intervals of reason and intervals of lunacy ; you, who are indulgence itself, will have compassion on my weakness.

What you will write to me will at least afford me amusement ; and, for the moment, fill my mind with ideas of Sans-Souci, and my gallery of pictures. I will own to you that, in reality, such thoughts are more agreeable than those which spring from carnage, murder, and all the wretchedness which cannot but be foreseen, and which would make Hercules himself tremble. The quarter of an hour of Rabelais will soon strike ; and we shall then only talk of cutting each others throats, and of marching and counter-marching, from one end of Germany to the other, in search, perhaps, of new misfortunes.

I have written a short pamphlet, which is published at Berlin. It is the relation of the journey of a Chinese emissary. The design of the work is a side blow at the Pope, who consecrates

fecrates the fwords of my enemies, and who affords a place of refuge to regicide monks. I think it will amuse you. I am the only man who have dared to raife my voice, and to let the cries of insulted reason be heard in opposition to the scandalous conduct of this pontiff of Baal. The work is neither long nor tiresome, but will make you laugh. The sole means of giving pain to our enemies, in the present age, is to load them with ridicule. You will judge how far I have been successful.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Your letters are to me a kind of consolation, like that administered to Elijah by the appearance of the ravens, that came to feed him in the desert; or the cooling spring to the stag exhausted with thirst; or like the apparition of Anchises to Eneas, when he first perceived him in hell. Do not, therefore, deprive me of my only enjoyment, amid so many causes of displeasure; and be certain of the friendship which I shall all my life preserve for you.

Adieu.

L E T T E R LXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, April 9, 1766.

I HAVE the honour to send the new edition to your majesty. I had promised you it would be complete on the twelfth, and it was finished on the ninth, of the month. The speed and correctness of this edition are wholly due to the zeal of M. de Beaufobre; I have only been the admirer of the care and labour he has exerted with the printers, especially to induce them to work during the Easter holidays.

If we had done the business with Neaulme, the edition would have been begun, but God knows when it would have been completed. Beside, this edition will be a certain profit of at least twenty-five hundred crowns. And why should not this be rather gained by a citizen of Berlin than by a foreigner? Really, sire, the people of Berlin are good folks. I have seen them, in the most disastrous moments, a hundred times more concerned for your majesty than for their own affairs. Actions render men famous according to the theatre on which they are stationed by fortune; and after the battle of Frankfort

fort I met with twenty, nay, perhaps a hundred, citizens superior to all the Romans, whom Livy has immortalized for their fortitude, and zeal in behalf of their country.

I have executed the commission which your majesty gave me respecting the pictures of M. Gottskowsky. He has within three years made the most superb collection of the works of Carlo Maratti, Ciro-Ferri, Titian, &c. He has a picture by Corregio, and an admirable Titian. But all I have mentioned is nothing compared to one of the paintings of Raphael, which he purchased at Rome. The subject is exceedingly pleasing. It is Lot and his two daughters making him drunk. The drapery does but half conceal their bodies; and the colouring equals that of Corregio, while the drawing is in the grand style of Raphael. I own I have never seen any thing comparable in beauty; and it appears to me preferable to the holy family of Raphael, which is the principal picture in the collection of the king of France.

You will find, sire, when you have the good fortune to return, happy and contented, to your city and your people, that I have not bestowed too high praise on this painting. I forgot to inform your majesty that it is nearly of the same size with the Leda of Corregio.

M 2

With

With respect to the price of the pictures, of this I can give no information to your majesty; and M. Gottskowski said it was necessary you should first see the paintings. In this I think he is right; for the painting which might appear to you cheap, you would think very dear, should it not please you on inspection; and another might seem to you too highly rated, the price of which, after having seen, you might not think extravagant. I have farther judged of his prices from several pictures, the price of which I asked, and which did not appear to me to be exorbitant. Having seen them yourself, you will make such abatements as you think proper. M. Gottskowski will carefully keep all the pictures he has collected, and will not sell one of them, till your majesty has first chosen such as please you.

I am exceedingly well satisfied with the manner in which he spoke to me on that subject. He is an excellent man, truly attached to your majesty, and one of our good citizens of Berlin.

Should your majesty wish me so to do, I will go to Sans-Souci, for a day, and will send you an exact and circumstantial account of the gallery of pictures, and of the garden.

In despite of all your foes, I see the time will soon come when your pains and troubles will be wholly

wholly at an end. The more I examine the state of the French affairs, the more am I convinced that they will make peace in less than two months; and, if your majesty will permit me, I will bet six of my finest engravings, against six others of your majesty's, that before midsummer the French will have concluded peace. Perhaps your majesty will say, I place no great dependance on my wager, since I risk nothing more than six sheets of paper; to which I have the honour to answer that, in my opinion, a good engraving is no joke; and that I should wish the French at the devil, eternally, were they to make me lose my wager; nay that they should become greater lunatics, and more beggarly, than they daily do become; and that they should be worse beaten than they were at Rosbach and at Minden, should they play me any such trick.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. When the correction of the line in the Epistle to Marshal Keith came to hand, the edition was printed; but I will cancel the page. In the copy which I send you, and in those which are almost bound, the passage stands as I had corrected it.

L E T T E R LXVI.

From the King.

Undated.

I HAVE proofs of your usual indulgence, marquis, in the judgment you pass on my Letters; they are good for the moment, and similar to many other temporary works, the duration of which does not extend beyond the day of birth.

With respect to the *Poesies Diverses*, they must be committed to the good pleasure of the printer. Should ever a peace be concluded, I promise you to think more seriously on the matter.

I have read the Last Sickness and Death of Father Bertier, which is pleasantly written; nor are the Jesuits ill dressed; but compare this piece with a certain Letter to Father Tournemine and you will see what contradictions in opinion! The one is a panegyric and the other a satire on the society. I wish great writers had better memories, that they might never forget what they themselves have previously published. Poets, however, do not pay such strict attention; and the fleeting winds bear away their words, and often their thoughts.

Nego-

Negotiations for peace resemble a fire newly lighted, which sometimes appears to have gone out, and at others emits reviving flashes. We must wait and see what will be the result. Philosophy and experience have subdued my natural vivacity; and have taught me to attend with patience, and, as a Christian would add, with resignation, for the offspring of futurity.

We have no engravings in the country where I am at present; nor can I bet any thing against yours except silks, and the iron which is here dug out of the mines. This would be a wager worthy of Pharasmanes, and is all I can do for you. Have the goodness to desire Gottskowsky to send me the catalogue of his pictures, which will afford me some amusement during the fits of inflammatory fever with which we shall soon be seized.

I shall send you no verses, at present, but shall reserve a whole bundle for the first opportunity. The demon of poetry is certainly an outrageous fiend, for he torments me in every possible situation, and assails me let me be where I will. If you happen to be acquainted with any exorcist, send him to me, that he may deliver me from this malignant spirit.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I recommend both you and myself to the protection of his most sa-

cred majesty, Chance. May he give you happiness, tranquillity, and health; and so may I find you, should this same Chance permit my wandering fates once more to restore me to the penates of Sans-Souci!

L E T T E R LXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 4, 1760.

THE letter your majesty has done me the favour to write, has produced joy the most sensible in my heart, and I wait that happy moment of which you speak with the utmost impatience. I have ever been persuaded that you would finally destroy all the projects of your enemies; and, when affairs have assumed the most cloudy aspect, I never once doubted but the sun would soon again break forth, dissipate the gloom, and restore to Prussia and Brandenburg that glory and tranquillity which they have ever enjoyed, under your reign, previous to the present war, which ill faith first excited, and in which folly blindly persists.

For what can we call the lunatic obstinacy of the French but folly? Although the crazy convulsions

vulsions of St. Paris are again becoming fashionable, in the metropolis of France, still does not that city contain the greatest madmen in the kingdom; they must be sought for at Versailles, and in the councils of the court. How great will be the pleasure, hereafter, to see such extravagant lunatics as much mortified as they deserve to be! I know not whether it would give me greater satisfaction to see French folly corrected, or Austrian pride abashed; for God himself could not annihilate them; he cannot change the essence of things, and vanity is the very nature of this people; a modest Austrian is an impossibility, as much as is matter without extension. Were your majesty to read all the silly things which the court of Vienna inserts in various gazettes, be your indignation as great as it would, you could not sometimes forbear laughing. I freely confess I wish to know what they will say, when that which your majesty has done me the favour to mention shall be published.

I shall give the plates into the possession of Voss. This man must regard you as the ancients regarded their Jupiter Hospitalis. He was a twofold god; first the universal deity, and secondly a household god. You confer on Voss the same good which, as king, you confer

on all your subjects ; and as an author you load his house with money. A Pagan bookseller would have placed you among his penates, and a Catholic bookseller would revere you as his saint. But what can a Lutheran bookseller do ? He has nothing but gratitude to offer you ; and with this the heart of Vofs is full. He every where proclaims how much he is indebted to you. You certainly have made him a lord. Within a week he is become one of the most wealthy citizens of Berlin. You tell me, sire, of the caprice of fortune, of which here is a very striking example. You knew not there was such a man as Vofs on earth ; nor did you hear of such an accident, till he had first been enriched by yourself.

I have read your majesty's verses with infinite pleasure. You resemble Horace in his Amorous Odes, and Virgil in his Bucolics, as far as the middle of the poem ; after which my Virgil proceeds to depict all the fury of war, as in the Eneid. The whole poem is exceedingly correct ; nor does ease of expression diminish either the justness of the thoughts or the precision of the style.

Your majesty is too good, to think of bestowing porcelain upon me. Occupied as you are
by

By affairs so important, how can you have so much complaisance as to recollect things that have so little connection with the great objects by which you must naturally be affected? But, since your majesty has done me the favour to inform me that you can send me some without the least inconvenience to yourself, I will take the liberty to say that I purchased coffee cups, tea sets, &c. at the sale of Schimmelmänn in Hamburg; should your majesty, therefore, think proper to send me some plates and dishes, I shall carefully preserve them; and my happiness will be complete, if, when peace shall be made, I may be allowed, in a house which I shall furnish tolerably well, to use them by giving your majesty a philosophic repast. Should you deign to grant me this favour, I then shall exclaim, like the high priest Simeon, “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have beheld thy salvation.”

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 18, 1760.

YOUR majesty would sooner make me believe in the real presence, transubstantiation, and all apostolic and catholic mysteries, than persuade me we have so much to fear as you say. Far from being alarmed for * * *, I am now gilding all my picture frames, and purchasing glasses and marble tables; and that not, certainly, with the supposition of bearing such furniture to Delos, or to Naxos, but to embellish my apartments at Potsdam.

I protest, with the most scrupulous truth, that my sole fear is the risk which you personally run, from the dangers to which you expose yourself; and this, indeed, sometimes occasions me to think of Greece. In other respects, I am not in the least disturbed concerning the war, being well convinced it will end happily to you and your subjects, should you only be careful of yourself, on whom the stability of the state is founded.

Your majesty assures me the French will not make peace; and I consent to lose every thing I possess in the world if they do not, on the first
check

check they shall meet with, forsake their allies. That they should begin the campaign is no misfortune to us, because they will but suffer new and heavy losses; and all the conquests of the English are so many pledges that they must be answerable for the losses which we may suffer.

Your majesty informs me that in three weeks you will have two hundred and twenty thousand men to oppose, not having yourself more than half the number. To this permit me to answer, that you here speak like those people who affect to be supposed less wealthy than they really are. Every body affirms you have a hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, which I can readily believe. I have read in the writings of Turenne and of marshal Saxe, and, what I think still greater authority, I have heard your majesty affirm, that an army of fifty thousand men is sufficient to make head against another of eighty thousand, a part of which only can at any time be employed on the day of battle; and which would become burthen some, during the whole campaign, from the difficulty of finding subsistence.

The gazettes all affirm that prince Ferdinand will have near a hundred and fifteen thousand men, and that he is soon to detach a considerable corps to oppose the army of the Empire.

If

If this be so, as from all the papers it appears to be, you will be rid of an embarrassment which has hitherto occasioned you much pain and many cares.

After having reflected on the resource which you hint at in your letter, I perceive that it cannot relate to Italy, and I have no doubt but that you mean the Turks. It would be most admirable should they declare war; but the conduct which they have hitherto observed, and the happy opportunities which they have lost, lead me to fear that they will continue to act with equal folly.

Not but a sudden revolution may take place, in a country where revolutions are so frequent; in which case I very well perceive that our situation would become most fortunate. I do not think, however, should no such event happen, that we are in danger of that reverse of fortune which your majesty presents to my view.

I have committed all the plates to the care of M. Vofs; they were in a chest with the others which your majesty has caused to be engraved. I send the list of these plates to your majesty, which Mrs. Schmidt gave me, as my discharge, when she remitted them to me. Your majesty will see what plates are still remaining in the chest, and I entreat you will send me your orders
that

that I may know to whom they ought to be delivered.

Your majesty is no doubt informed that the second volume of your works has been printed in France and at Frankfort, which contains the Epistles and the Letters to Voltaire. Suspicion ought not to be encouraged without great prejudice*; but, when I recollect your majesty gave this volume to no person, I think in my own despite of Voltaire and D'Arget. If neither of these people have sent the work to the press, it must have been published by the devil himself, to punish you for disbelieving his existence. I have run through that which has been sent to M. de Catt, that it might be remitted to you. There are several errors of the press, but the pieces it contains appear to me to be charming. The Letters to Voltaire are admirable, and full of imagination, and new thoughts. I laughed heartily to see you promise a book in proof of the Christian religion, when Bruhl should write commentaries on the campaigns of marshal Turenne.

I have many more things to say to your majesty, but it is now two o'clock in the morning.

* *Il ne faut pas former des soupçons sans de grands préjugés.*
I quote the author's words to justify the translation, because I do not understand the reason of the assertion. He probably means—*without good cause.* T.

It is full sixteen hours since I had sight of my bed, and I am going in search of it, for I rose at ten o'clock in the morning.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

THERE is much difference between the art of logic and the art of conjecture. The arguments of mathematicians are rigorous and exact, because they relate to the possible or palpable objects of nature; but, when it is required to argue from combining circumstances, the least ignorance of uncertain and obscure facts breaks the chain, and we are deceived every moment. This is no defect of a just understanding, but error arising from ideas that wear the face of truth, and because men's opinions change; hence it is impossible to imagine all the whims which their fancies may conceive.

It is for this reason, my dear marquis, that you are deceived in your judgment concerning the French. They will not make peace till their misfortunes shall be incapable of increase. In

like manner you deceive yourself relative to another nation, because you are no necromancer, and consequently it is impossible for you to represent things to yourself as they are.

You are equally mistaken respecting my army; nor is your mind guilty of any of the errors which I have recited; but your reasoning, on other occasions consistent, rests on false principles. I certainly have said that the general who understood his art, having fifty thousand men, might make head against eighty thousand; but I never said that, with fifty thousand men, he could make head against a hundred and twenty thousand; for, provided the general who should command the superior army were not an automaton, he would distress his enemy by detachments, and would soon entirely crush him.

For me, my dear marquis, condemned by my unfortunate stars to philosophize on future contingencies and on probabilities, I employ my whole attention to examine the principle on which my argument must rest, and to procure all possible information on this point. Deprived of such precaution, the edifice I erect, wanting a basis, would fall like a house of cards. I am glad to understand that you, philosopher as you are, from your own small experience, are convinced of the difficulty of finding our road in darkness so great,

when there is not so much as a beacon, nor even an ignis-fatuus, to guide us on our way. For these reasons, politicians and warriors should be censured with indulgence. It must be allowed that a single article of false intelligence, or a motion of the enemy unknown to the general, might lead him to commit numerous errors; and that there are cases in which his ignorance is invincible. The situation of the politician is exactly the same; the whim of the monarch, some court intrigue, or the death of a creature dearly purchased, unhinges his whole system; and, in despite of all his precaution, he never can prevent fortune from exercising her full power.

Forgive me these reflections, which may serve as my apology, and convince you that I am not at least the immediate cause of all the follies I have committed. If you will but draw a faithful picture of my situation, you will, at the first glance, discover the causes of the great perplexity in which I am; and will be obliged to allow that human prudence is insufficient to unravel them all.

You must give the bookseller only those engravings which relate to the *Poesies Diverses*, and let Schmidt keep the others.

I congratulate you, my dear marquis, on your fine furniture: they are hard at work on your china,

china, with which I flatter myself you will be well satisfied. I hope it will be finished in a fortnight ; and it shall be sent away immediately, should I still remain here.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; ruminate in tranquillity at Berlin, and give thanks to your lucky star, that it does not oblige you to philosophize on future contingencies, and the caprices of man.

I am your faithful friend. *Vale.*

L E T T E R LXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, May 27, 1760.

YOUR letter abounds in understanding and wisdom ; but, however consistent your discourse may be, I am not convinced ; I still am persuaded that at length affairs will be much better than you suppose them to be.

He who at Rosbach saw the French humbled, and who vanquished at Lissa his most haughty foe, may well escape the snares of Daun. Accidents I fear, but other fears I have none.

I have read the Letter of madame de Pompadour to the queen, which is a most ingenious, and, at the same time, a most cutting satire. I am not astonished that it should throw a proud woman into despair; but after this I am not, however, surpris'd that, from the influence of La Pompadour, the French should continue the war, notwithstanding the need they have of peace. This woman, destitute of feeling, and deprived of love for her country, would trouble herself little though France should lose the East Indies and North America, could she but successfully avenge herself.

Your Chinese Letters have rais'd an astonishing clamour; the devout of all religions are united in their exclamations against them. Men of wit laugh, and think them charming; but men of wit have very little influence over the multitude, who are governed by fools. The Austrians have given extracts from the work in several gazettes, as if it were a hundred times more dangerous than the works of Spinoza or Collins. The authors of these extracts do not name you; but they take care to make the author, whom they wish to injure, known. I have the honour to inform your majesty that it is indeed scarcely possible for you to remain concealed whenever you write any work; your style, and especially

a certain original turn, continually betray you, be you as careful as you please in your disguise.

Thus, for example, you never mentioned the Funeral Oration to me ; yet scarcely had I read twenty lines before I discovered your majesty. And, had you not informed me that you wrote the Letter from La Pompadour to the queen, do you suppose I should not have perceived you were the author, when I should have read this and the following passage ?

“ You will not remain the less apostolic,
 “ madam ; for, not to hide any thing from you,
 “ the apostles, your predecessors, took the sisters
 “ with them ; and to suppose that they only
 “ took them to pray together, would be rather
 “ too good-natured.”

I know Voltaire does not write against the queen, and La Pompadour ; and, if Voltaire have not said this, who is the author who possesses sufficient imagination, and is, at the same time, sufficiently daring thus to write, if we except the philosopher of Sans-Souci ? The following is the other characteristic passage I mentioned.

“ They go still farther at Rome, where the
 “ common father of the faithful, in his indul-
 “ gence, even authorises licentious places ; and,
 “ provided they do but pay, he is satisfied.

“ This kind father takes compassion on his
“ weak children, and turns such peccadillos
“ into good, by the money which he gains for
“ the church. The world has ever been the
“ same ; pleasure is necessary to it, and freedom
“ in its pleasures.”

Permit me here, sire, to make the reflections of an author who should endeavour to discover the person who had written a work that contained these two passages. He would first say to himself—“ A protestant author would not
“ laugh at the apostles ; and a catholic author
“ would not turn the Pope to ridicule ; it must
“ therefore be an author without religion. The
“ work is full of wit and fancy, like those written by Voltaire and the philosopher of Sans-Souci. That Voltaire has not written it we
“ know ; we have therefore every proof that the
“ other has : irreligion, wit, imagination, style,
“ and bold thoughts, all render the conjecture
“ evident.”

I but repeat these things to your majesty, to shew you the necessity there is that you should not write, when you have any reason to wish not to be known. There are but two means which you can employ for this purpose. The first would be to affect a heavy style, which remedy would be worse than the disease ; and the
second

second would be to write in the language of bigotry. But your fancy would betray you in your own despite; you must therefore resolve either to write no more, or to be immediately known, to readers who have any discernment.

I thank your majesty for the porcelain, to contain which I have had a good press made, with glass doors. Let not your majesty, however, imagine that I give myself the airs of a *petit maitre*, or a great lord; when I speak of glass doors, I only mean squares of glass, that cost eight gros each. They are very white and smooth, and this is all that is necessary for a man of letters. A philosopher ought equally to avoid the pomp of Seneca, and the rustic simplicity of Crates and Diogenes. Epicurus had a town-house and country-house, but they were no more than neat and modest. Among the good things which nature has granted to mankind, mediocrity appears to me one of the greatest. By mediocrity I understand a little more than enough, which is all that man needs to render him truly happy.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXI.

From the King.

Meissen, June 1, 1760.

YOUR conjectures on the style of authors, my dear marquis, are better than those you make on politics ; not, however, but there are still many things to reply.

1. I think my style might better be known by certain solecisms, than by the turn of my phrases.

2. There are many men who think and write with freedom. Why will you not allow Rousseau of Geneva to be suspected, and various other authors with whom I am unacquainted, of having written works so frivolous as those in question ?

3. Might it not be supposed that I am too much occupied, with important affairs, to waste my time in writing such nonsense ?

4. The Chinese Letters contain nothing more daring than do the Persian Letters.

5. The Letter of La Pompadour should rather appear to be the production of one of the indolent wits of Paris, than of a German who commands an army.

In

In fine, my dear marquis, were it necessary to plead my cause before a court, I should still have arguments enough to induce my judges to acquit me. The war is not continued by my Letter of La Pompadour, who is perfectly ignorant that I am the author of it; nor can I be suspected so to be at Paris. There are other reasons too numerous and too ample to recapitulate.

Will you not therefore allow it is impossible to divine what shall be the effects of occasional causes? Will you not own that the art of conjecture is a most ungrateful and deceitful art? Yet this is the trade I am obliged to follow. I would rather be tossed on the wild ocean, without mast or compass, than be under this necessity. Your own short experience in the arrangement of the political system of Europe, ought to have convinced you of this. I ten times a day consign myself over to Satan, but I do not therefore make any great progress.

I congratulate you, my dear marquis, on your having become a poet. My source is dried up for the campaign: it is Lent with me; nor will I indulge myself in a distich till affairs shall become more favourable to us than they are at present.

Your porcelain is making, but it cannot leave
this

this place in less than a fortnight. It will consist of two terrines, and four large dishes, four small, two long dishes for roast meat, vinegar and oil bottles, four saltsellers, and four dozen of plates. It will be really beautiful, and in a new taste, the designs of which I furnished. I flatter myself you will be satisfied with it.

The clouds are collecting for the opening of the campaign, in which the thunder still remains concealed ; but beware of the moment when it shall burst.

Adieu, my dear marquis. I wish you every thing I want, to render you happy ; which are tranquillity, rest, health, and content. I no longer possess any thing. My constitution is worn. Fortune, health, cheerfulness, and youth, forsake me. I am, therefore, good for nothing, but to people the country of Proserpine. If you have any message to send into those lower regions, you have only to give me notice.

Farewel.

L E T T E R LXXII.

From the King.

Undated.

ALL you can say, my dear marquis, will never persuade me that our situation is good. Fortune continues averse to me. I passed the Elbe, and the day before yesterday endeavoured to attack Laschy; but he made a very seasonable retreat. Thus do my projects fail, one after the other. The army of the Circles will arrive at Dresden to-morrow, where it will be left; and Daun will then gain so great a superiority over me as to make it impossible for me to augur well. Laudohn is besieging Glatz; and I have only a handful of men in Silesia, who cannot succour the place. I am wasting away on every side.

Politics are as contrary to my interests as war: I can succeed in none of the things which I undertake, and I prepare to encounter every misfortune fate can teach me to predict. You only see objects at a distance; you know things only by halves; this produces a degree of security, in you, which you would not possess did the evidence of truth strike you. Be very
3 certain

certain that, without some miracle, we are lost. If we can drag on till the month of September, it will be much. All the art and the abilities of a general are insufficient. Circumstanced as I am, supernatural events are necessary; and you know that these are no more. In fine, I am in the most dreadful situation in which any monarch can be placed. I see myself insensibly decay, like a man in a dropsy, who daily observes the progress of his disease, and, perceiving the cold harbingers of death deprive him of his limbs, every moment expects the last attack to be made on his heart.

Your porcelain is gone, and should by this be at Berlin. Make use of it, if it can give you pleasure; and do not too much flatter yourself with uncertain hopes, which may lead you into very strange errors.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

Berlin, June 7, 1760.

I HAVE the honour to send your majesty the first sheet of the beautiful quarto edition of
of

of the *Poesies Diverses*, and you will find this edition will at least equal that which was printed at the palace. It is sold before it is finished, and almost wholly for England. You are informed, no doubt, that a statue in bronze has been erected to you in Dublin; and that it has been placed in the best street in the city, which is at present called Prussian Street. The papers have for a month continually spoken of this statue. I did not mention it before, because I well know how little your arch-philosophic character is affected by such kinds of apotheosis. As a king, I forgive your ranking yourself superior to glory; but as a hero, at least, it ought to be dear to you. Satisfied, however, with deserving, you feel great indifference for the honours with which it is attended. You prove the falsehood of the proverb which says that, never was poet moderate in his thirst of fame. You are a good poet, yet you fly praise. Your modesty might well put all men of letters to the blush.

I have read with admiration the list of the beautiful service of porcelain, which your majesty has been pleased to bestow on me. I immediately went to visit my press, where I arranged it in my imagination, waiting the day till I might arrange it in reality. Permit me to tell your majesty that the coquette, to whom!

baubles

baubles newly invented have been promised, is not more impatient for their reception than I am to obtain a sight of this porcelain. The manufacturer's fortnights appear to me as long as the weeks of the prophet Daniel; and, without offence to these good workmen, be it said, I ought, according to the first letter in which your majesty did me the favour to mention it, to have received it a fortnight since; yet, from your last, I find I have another fortnight to wait. Your majesty says I am become a poet; were I so, I would write an Horatian ode to return you thanks, and a Juvenalian satire against the tardy maker.

All people of taste, and all who are acquainted with the arts, go from Berlin to Potsdam, to visit the gallery of pictures, with as much eagerness as the devout travel to Loretto, or on pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella. Those who have seen Italy and France unanimously allow that, St. Peter's at Rome excepted, there is no building so sumptuous and so elegant. I hope to see it, in company with your majesty, at the beginning of autumn; or, should we not have peace, that you will make a fortunate campaign, which will, this winter, restore you to your people, and to all your good and faithful servants, to whom your life is as precious as their own.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

LETTER LXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, June 17, 1760.

I AM very sensible of the pains and perplexities which your majesty must at present endure; yet will you find, in your fortitude and genius, expedients to surmount them gloriously: I perceive a certain hope which has seized on every heart, and which is to me a sure pledge of the accomplishment of that I have always entertained, and which, in spite of misfortune, has never yet been deceived. I have had an opportunity of reading several letters written by the officers of your majesty's army, which speak the good will of all the troops, and describe them as being ardent in their zeal for their country and their sovereign.

These letters have appeared to me the most excellent of omens, for the success of the campaign, because they truly display the feelings of the officer and the foldier; they being written by persons who had no reason to disguise their sentiments, to the correspondents to whom they are addressed.

I allow, Sire, your enemies are greatly superior

rior in numbers ; but your own military talents, and the valour of your troops, will supply the deficiency. What you call a miracle, I call a fortunate event, effected by your prudence and your courage, which will soon or late happen in the course of this campaign, provided you do but take care of your own person. Reflect how necessary you are to the prosperity of affairs, which cannot but finally assume a smiling face.

I cannot recover from my astonishment, at perceiving the numerous English fleets tranquilly at anchor, in the Thames. The month of July will soon begin, and they still continue inactive. I suppose there are negotiations between England and France ; but the best manner to hasten their conclusion will be to send a hundred ships of the line, against a nation which does not possess fifteen, and which has every thing to fear for the remainder of her colonies. The French appear to me like certain half infidels, who will not confess during the progress of their disease, but who send for twenty priests, when the physician informs them they cannot recover. The English fleet in action would be the physician announcing death, and the priests called in the conclusion of the peace.

Well may your majesty say my experience in the affairs of Europe is small. Yet where is,

I will not say the man, but the demi-god, who, perceiving the friendship and apparent intimacy between Spain and England, the pretensions to and claims of Spain on several of the states of Italy, would not renounce all political conjecture, when he should see this same Spain transport, from Naples and Sicily to Barcelona, all the artillery, cannon balls, and warlike ammunition that are there to be found? You, sire, know the secret reasons of all these proceedings; but, though you have this advantage over other men, you have the mortification to see numerous steps, manœuvres, and negotiations, in which good sense has as little part as in works of divinity.

I once more thank your majesty for my porcelain: may Heaven grant I may soon, for once, employ it, before I see you, to celebrate the first battle you shall gain! After which it shall be shut up, till I shall transport it to Potsdam; where I shall behold you, in peace, fortunate, and crowned with glory.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, June 22, 1760.

I HAVE just received the beautiful and magnificent service of china which your majesty has done me the honour to send me. The design of it is charming, the painting excellent, and the symbols of scepticism invented with taste. When I contemplated so many beautiful things, I freely own to your majesty it was at first with great pleasure; but this emotion was soon succeeded by confusion, when I reflected how little I merited so noble a present from your majesty. The greater the favours are, with which, Sire, you honour me, the more do I feel I owe them entirely to your bounty. You act like the Creator, who, from the vilest clay, is sometimes pleased to form a vessel which he renders precious. How glorious is it to me that you should deign to show kindness toward me, which, as long as I live, will gain me the esteem of all thinking people; and which, to posterity, ascertains an immortality to which I had not vanity enough to dare to pretend, by any of my feeble works!

The

The favour which your majesty has just granted a philosopher, of talents no greater than mine, will, in the eyes of the public, be a reparation of the injury which folly and fanaticism have lately, in France, done to those great men by whom it is cultivated.

A comedy has been publicly played at the theatre, intitled *Les Philosophes* *. In vain have the worthy exclaimed against this intolerable abuse ; ministers, bishops, and several magistrates, have supported the enemies of reason, and the comedy of The Philosophers has been acted six-and-twenty times successively ; in one of the scenes of which Jean Jacques Rousseau is made to enter like a beast, on all fours, and comes to maintain his opinion on the equality of mankind.

Twenty thousand copies of this piece have been sold at Paris, in eight days ; on which a partisan of philosophy has written a very ingenious but too violent criticism. It appears to be rather the effort of anger than of moderation, which is the true characteristic of philosophy. I send it to your majesty, because it may afford you a moment's amusement.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The Philosophers.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

From the King.

Groß Dobritz, June 26, 1768.

I HAVE received your letter of the 22d, my dear marquis, at a time when I again feel, as I had foreseen, the malignant effects of my enraged ill-fortune. You no doubt have heard of what has happened to me in Silesia, and must be obliged to confess my prophecies are but too well accomplished : Heaven grant they may not be entirely so.

I gave orders for your porcelain with an intention to please you, and I am very glad to hear from yourself that you are so well satisfied. Alas ! my dear marquis, I am but a poor immortaliser ! I myself wish to see the conclusion of that period, during which I am destined to vegetate, in this vale of darkness and tribulation. The end of my path is rugged, gloomy, and fatal.

I love philosophy, because it moderates my passions, and because it renders me indifferent respecting my own dissolution, and the annihilation of thought. I wish to see the comedy that has been written against philosophers. It must

must be granted there are men who usurp this title, and who furnish subjects of ridicule ; but in general it is the disgrace of our age to wish to degrade science, which is the highest honour to the human mind, and the school which has produced so many great men. I, like you, think the preface which you have sent me written with too much bitterness. There are certain personalities in it which displease, and mark a cholerick mind, that breathes nothing but vengeance, and is for that reason unworthy of a true philosopher.

To me it seems, the author might have been satisfied with comparing our age to that of Socrates, the new comedy at Paris to that of Athens, in which Socrates is introduced in a chorus of clouds, and his hemlock to our modern persecution, &c. ; by which irony might have been evident, but not malignity. But men will ever be men. The least reptile, finding itself attacked, will dart out its tongue, in self-defence. The preface was written in the first emotions of anger, and we ought to wait till our anger be over before we write. Oh ! how prudent, moderate, forbearing, and mild, does the school of adversity render man ! The proof is terrible ; but, when it has been endured, its utility continues to the end of life.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; have some indulgence for my affliction, for it is legitimate. I have for these two years been continually suffering, nor do I see any end to my pains. I wish you better fortune, more tranquillity, and less embarrassment.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, July 2, 1760.

WHEN I received the letter which your majesty did me the honour to write, I had not the least knowledge of the misfortune which has befallen general Fouquet ; for that affair has only become public, in Berlin, within three days. From all the letters, however, that arrive from Breslau, it appears to me that, except the glory of having taken some colours, and thirty pieces of artillery, the action is as injurious to the enemy as to us. Four of their deserters came yesterday to Berlin, three of whom were Prussians that were taken at Maxen, and who enlisted with the Austrians, in the hope that they should find some opportunity to return into their own country. These men affirm that the
Austrians

Austrians had more than twenty thousand men killed, or wounded. I allow we lost six thousand men, killed or taken; but it is to buy victory dearly, when the loss of the victor triples that of the vanquished.

Beside, all the letters from Breslau affirm that soldiers daily arrive, by hundreds, who were supposed to be dead, or prisoners, and who had only lost their road.

I well perceive your majesty will be obliged to make a detachment, which will enfeeble your army; but marshal Daun has been the first to detach. One of the circumstances which console me in this unfortunate affair is, the intrepidity which our troops discovered, a single regiment excepted, which is said, at Berlin, to have acted amiss. All the others performed wonders. Such courage will inspire fear and terror, even in the victor, when he shall mean next to attack. Should the taking of Glatz cost the Austrians as much as that of Landshut, they will, before the campaign be half ended, have entirely lost a considerable army; and, should they meet with a check, Landshut and Glatz will be of no service to them, in the execution of the pretended grand plans which they have formed.

Permit me to ask your majesty what prince

Ferdinand is doing : he has at present a hundred thousand effective men, all excellent troops, and he remains almost inactive ; yet, had the French been beaten, he might easily have sent a detachment of fifteen thousand men into Saxony.

Allow me, sire, to repeat, that nothing seems so singular as the conduct of the English. They have eighty ships equipped in their ports. We are now in the month of July, and they continue inactive. When do they mean to employ them ? In the months of December and January ? In the mean time the French, who scarcely have six or seven shattered ships remaining, beat them in America, and perhaps have already recovered Quebec. This is really dreadful : the English must have lost the use of their understanding. The French are leading them by the nose, and will play them many other tricks, if they do not act with more vigour.

Your majesty said, in one of your letters, that the objects of the English fleets this year would be Martinico, Montreal, and Pondicherry ; yet the fine weather will soon be over, and these formidable fleets are drinking strong beer at Portsmouth and at Plymouth. Their enemies in the mean time profit by their delay, and are on the eve of recovering, in a fortnight, what

has cost England two years of labour and battle.

I have the honour to send your majesty the only copy we have here of the comedy of *The Philosophers*. Diderot and Rousseau are the most ill treated. It is true that the first is only a confused repeater of words, and the second disgusts by the strange paradoxes which he adopts, on all occasions. Your majesty no doubt recollects having read the philosophic thoughts of Diderot, where the most trivial things are declaimed on with the most ridiculous emphasis. In the work on the equality of mankind, by Rousseau, there are, not only singular opinions, but, some that are dangerous to all governments and states. I pity D'Alembert, being a man of merit, to have connected himself with this herd of madmen; but, in literature, as in politics, we cannot always select the friends we wish; necessity and combining accidents make us determine on the part we take.

I have the honour to be, &c,

LET-

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

From the King.

Near Dresden, July 15, 1760.

IN vain, my dear marquis, do you flatter yourself, for our affairs take a most detestable turn. I thought to have repaired them by marching to lay siege to Dresden. I shall take this city, but shall not by that better my situation. Write my epitaph before I am dead; and believe me to be sufficiently well informed, of my own situation, not to judge it desperate without good reason.

The English fleets are acting successfully on all sides, so that they do not merit any reproach. Prince Ferdinand has only seventy thousand men, instead of the hundred thousand you have granted him, which changes the picture. You reason from what you read in the gazettes; but these gazettes do not relate the truth, and therefore you are deceived. Laudohn has lost ten thousand men at the affair of Landsbut; notwithstanding which the Austrians still have ninety-five thousand men to oppose me with, and the Russians have sixty thousand. Such is our situation; not to mention many other things on which it behoves

behoves me to keep silence, at present, but of which hereafter I may speak.

The comedy of *The Philosophers* is tolerably well written; but there are allusions which did not strike me, because I knew not to what they referred; as for example, “Young man, take “and read.” “The father of the family,” &c. Alas! my dear marquis, the time has been when this would have highly amused me; but at present the gulph in which I am about to fall, headlong, is continually before my eyes.

Adieu! Do not indulge yourself in chimerical hopes. Pity me by anticipation. Pray Heaven that the oracles I utter may be false! But happen what will let us write our epitaph in time.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, July 25, 1760.

NO person can be more sensible than I am of the perplexing situation of your majesty; and, had I less confidence in your knowledge and fortitude, I should fear the arrival of the most distressing events. But, if miracles be necessary

cessary to extricate you from your difficulties, miracles you will enact. Is it less than a miracle to see Silesia, after the check at Landshut, almost void of enemies? Is it not a miracle to see you before Dresden, destroying a part of the enemy's magazines, and keeping Daun in a state of suspense, amid all his projected operations?

Things appear to assume a more smiling face. The prince your nephew, the hero whom you tenderly love, soon repaired the loss he sustained; and we behold a corps of the French totally cut off or taken. The English have just gained a decisive victory in the East Indies; and there is no doubt but Pondicherry has surrendered; the fact is affirmed in all the Dutch gazettes: or, should it not at this moment be taken, it soon must be, and the news cannot but arrive with the first ship.

The French were before in a most melancholy condition; and, after a loss so irreparable, what must they be at present? The following is the beginning of the last remonstrances of the parliament, which have been printed in all the public papers.

“ Nothing, sire, can be more manifest than
“ the exhausted state of the finances, except the
“ impossibility of re-establishing them.”

Such was the language held in France before
the

the taking of Pondicherry. What then will be said at present, when half the kingdom, which had placed its funds in the East India company, is reduced to beggary, by the destruction and total overthrow of that said company ?

The English are soon to send new succours into Germany. They ought at present to make the greatest efforts, if they wish for peace, that they may deprive the French of all hope of seizing on the electorate of Hanover; and afford you all the aid they can, to prevent you from sinking under the weight of your enemies.

I have heard that the young Provençal officer, to whom your majesty had the goodness to grant a commission in your army, has fallen at the attack of the suburb of Dresden. I pitied him, because he was a very worthy man; but my consolation is that he died performing his duty, in the service of your majesty. I wish I were equally young, that I might be of some aid to your majesty, and ten times a day encounter the same fate. I die with despair at seeing myself, in these stormy times, a useless burthen on the earth, of less service, to my master, than the least of his peasants who can drive a forage waggon, or the horses that drag his cannon. Till now my decay only appeared to be vexatious;

tious; at present I think it shameful and dishonourable.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Grossenhayn,
August 1, 1760.

THE siege of Dresden is gone off in smoke. We are at present on the full march for Silesia; we shall undoubtedly come to action on the frontiers, which may happen between the 7th and 10th of this month. Glatz is taken, Neiss besieged, and there is no time to lose. Should we be fortunate, I will send you word; should we be the reverse, I previously take leave of you and all the good company.

Poor Foresta is killed, and has fallen a useless sacrifice. In fine, my dear marquis, the shop and stock are all going to the devil. We shall march the day after to-morrow. I foresee all the horror of the situation that awaits me, and have firmly taken my resolution.

Adieu: I embrace you. Think of me sometimes, and be persuaded of my esteem.

L E T-

LETTER LXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August 12, 1760

NEWS from Silesia informs us that your majesty is safely arrived there, with your army. Your last letter threw me into the utmost consternation; because, knowing how much you expose yourself, I feared lest some accident should happen to you, should there be a battle. And what would become of us all, should we have the misfortune to lose you?

Since the receipt of the letter with which you have honoured me, prince Henry has driven off the Austrians, and has raised the siege of Breslau; your nephew, the hereditary prince of Brunswic, has beaten and entirely dispersed the French army, commanded by M. du Muy; and you have arrived in Silesia, in despite of all opposition from Daun. I hope all will go well for the remainder of the campaign. I am better pleased to see war carried on in a country where you are situated between six or seven fortresses, of your own, than in Saxony, which is an open country, and where the towns make but little resistance. I have a presentiment, which has never

been falsified, and which tells me something fortunate will happen.

Should prince Ferdinand, who, with the succour he has lately received, is now as strong as the French, but be victorious, it will put you at your ease on the side of Saxony, and he might then send you a considerable detachment. In fact, sire, provided you do but preserve your person, every thing will be recovered in time.

Your majesty does me the honour to inform me that Glatz is taken; but it is here affirmed that only the city, and not the citadel, is at present under the power of the Austrians; and it should seem, from the articles of Vienna inserted in all the gazettes, that the citadel has not yet surrendered. I wish the rumour may be true; but, your majesty not having made any mention of the citadel, I much fear it is lost. Yet should it be so, all the other fortresses are at present out of danger. The season is advanced, and in six weeks it will no longer be time to lay siege; especially if, as I am convinced, we do not lose a battle. Should one be fought, we shall be the victors. But, notwithstanding this persuasion, I would give all I possess in the world that there might be no battle, during the rest of the campaign.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

Berlin, August 17, 1760;

One o'clock in the Morning.

S I R E,

THE joy which the news of the victory just gained by your majesty has incited in me is so great that I sit down at midnight, the very moment I heard it, to write to you. Perhaps your majesty has already received the letter which I had the honour to write to you, three days ago, in which I mentioned my fears concerning the dangers to which you exposed yourself, and that these fears induced me to wish there might be no battle, though I was well assured, should one be fought, you would be the conqueror. My presentiment is now justified; and I am convinced you will prove the truth of all I have so often repeated to your majesty, in my letters, and that you will finally be victorious over every opponent.

But, in the name of all your subjects, in the name of all your servants, and, what is more, sire, in the name of that glorious immortality which you have acquired, preserve your

person; in which, not only all the happiness, but, also, the duration and stability of the state reside. Let me entreat your majesty to excuse the disorder of my letter! I am inebriated with joy, and I protest to your majesty my mind is in a situation which renders it impossible for me to have more connected ideas. Your last letter had overwhelmed me with mortal grief; judge what effects the news of your victory must have produced in my heart.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXIII.

From the King.

Hermanſdorff near Breslau,
August 27, 1760.

FORMERLY, my dear marquis, the affair of the 15th would have decided the fate of the campaign; at present this action is no more than a scratch: we must have a grand battle to put all beyond doubt, which according to all appearances must soon be fought; and should this be favourable to us we may then rejoice.

I nevertheless thank you for the sincere part you take in this advantage. Many stratagems
and

and much address were necessary to bring things to this point. Do not talk to me of dangers; the last action only cost me a coat and a horse, and this is to purchase victory cheaply.

I have not received the letter you mention. We are, with respect to correspondence, blockaded, as it were, by the Russians on the side of the Oder, and by the Austrians on the other side. A skirmish was necessary to give Cocceji a passage; I hope he delivered my letter to you. Never in my life was I in a worse situation than I have been this campaign. Nothing less than prodigies can make us surmount the difficulties which I foresee. I shall certainly do my duty on the occasion;—but never forget, my dear marquis that I cannot dispose of fate, and that I am obliged to depend too much on casualties in my plans, not having the means to form others more solid. These are Herculean labours, which I am to effect in an age when strength forsakes me, when my infirmities increase, and, to own the truth, when hope, the sole consolation of the unfortunate, begins also to fail.

You are not sufficiently in the secret to form any precise idea of all the dangers, which threaten the state: I know and conceal them. I keep my apprehensions all to myself, and com-

municate none but my hopes to the public, and all the good news which I am enabled to relate.

Should the blow I meditate succeed, it will then be time to give the rein to joy ; but till then let us not flatter ourselves, lest some unexpected misfortune should dishearten you too much.

I here lead the life of a Carthusian warrior. I am obliged to think much on my affairs : the remainder of my time I dedicate to letters, which are my consolation, as they were that of the consul orator, who was the father of his country and of eloquence. I know not whether I shall survive the war, but, should I outlive it, I am well determined to pass the remainder of my life in retirement, in the bosom of philosophy and friendship. When we can more freely correspond you will give me pleasure by writing oftener.

I know not where we shall take up our winter quarters. My house at Breslau was destroyed during the bombardment. Our enemies envy us the light of day, and the air we breathe. They must however leave us some place ; and, should it be a place of security, it will be a banquet to me to see you there.

What, my dear marquis, is at present become of your peace with France ? You see your nation is more blind than you imagined it to be.

The

The madmen will lose Canada, and Pondicherry, to please the queen of Hungary, and the czarina. Heaven grant prince Ferdinand may pay them well for their zeal ! The innocent officer and the poor soldier fall the victims of these woes, but the illustrious guilty escape unpunished.

I know an anecdote of the duke de Choiseul, which I will relate to you when I see you. Never did a more mad or inconsistent proceeding blast the fame of a French minister, since the monarchy had a minister.

I am interrupted by business ; I was in train to write, but I perceive I must conclude, that I may neither weary you nor neglect my duty.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Reiffendorff,
September 18, 1760.

I HAVE received your two letters. I have certainly escaped a very imminent danger, and had all the good fortune which my situation required at Lignitz. In a common war this

battle would have been much; in the present it is no more than a skirmish, and my affairs, in general, are but little the better.

I do not intend to write you any lamentation, nor to alarm you with all my subjects of fear and disquiet, although I can assure you they are great. The present crisis changes its appearance, but does not come to a decision. Nothing hastens the denouement. I am roasting by a slow fire; I resemble a body that is mutilated piecemeal, and which is daily deprived of some of its members. Heaven help us, for we have great need of aid!

You continually talk to me of my person; but you ought to be well convinced that it is not necessary I should live, but very necessary that I should do my duty, and fight for my country, that I may, if possible, save it from destruction. I have had many trifling advantages, and have great inclination to assume *Maximus in minimis et minimus in maximis*, for my motto.

You cannot imagine all the hard fatigues we undergo; this surpasses every preceding campaign, nor do I sometimes know to what saint to address myself. But I weary you, with my troubles and my griefs. My cheerfulness and good humour are buried with the dear and respectable persons to whom my heart was
united.

united. The close of my life is mournful and gloomy; do not, my dear marquis, forget your old friend.

The posts and all correspondence are interrupted. Various arts are necessary to convey letters, and still much is hazarded. Write to me at all events; for even if the avaricious or the bears * should take your letters, what discoveries will they make? And they always afford me consolation.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

L E T T E R LXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, September 25, 1760.

I HOPE your majesty has received three letters which I have had the honour to write, since the last victory which you gained. About a month ago, you wrote me word that the shop and stock were all going to the devil; yet since that time you have paid the drafts of Laudohn at sight, and have satisfied the demands of Beck. Hulsen, your clerk in Saxony, has answered all

* *Les avarés, ou les urfomans.*

those of the prince of Deux-Ponts; and if you can but pay one more debt, before the month of November, you will be among the merchants whose trade and affairs are in the most orderly state.

The physical and chemical class has lost its director by the death of M. Eller. The academy in a body, and the curators and directors, immediately proceeded to an election, agreeable to the ordinance of your majesty, and the ninth article of the regulations of the academy, which says—"When any director shall die, his place
" shall be filled, according to the denomination
" of all the academicians, by a pensionary member of that class over which the deceased director presided."

Agreeable to this ordinance the academy has appointed M. Margraff, who is undoubtedly the most able chemist in Europe, and a great philosopher, and whom the academies of Paris and London consult as an oracle. The academy, sire, has commanded me, as director of one of the classes, to inform your majesty of its choice, and of its punctuality in following the rules which you prescribed by the mouth of the late M. de Maupertuis; which rules it will ever observe most strictly, that it may continue, by its zeal for the honour of the sciences, and its obedience

to

to your ordinances, to merit the favour of your august patronage.

If I am not mistaken, sire, I here send you some sublime and noble phrases ; and while, as director, I deliver the orders of the academy, I do not assume the style “ of him who was more “ erratic than the Jew whose style and mask I “ formerly borrowed*.”

Has your majesty seen a short poem by Voltaire, entitled *Le pauvre Diable* † ? It is a very pleasant poem, and full of satirical traits against various authors, whom he does not love. I will send it your majesty by the first courier.

I imagine it is of little importance to politics to know the present residence of the pretender ; I think it my duty, however, here to insert a passage from a letter written to one of our academicians, by birth a Swift, whose name is Merian, an intimate friend of the late M. de Maupertuis, and a man of circumspection and much merit. This letter is dated from Bouillon near Sedan.

“ We have a person here who has made
“ much noise, by his pretensions, and of whom
“ posterity will speak advantageously, till the

* The marquis alludes to his own assumed character, as author of the Jewish Letters. T.

† The poor devil.

“ moment he left France. He lives at this
 “ place like a private person. I see him often,
 “ but I shall not continue long to visit him,
 “ because his character is insupportable. It is
 “ singular to meet with so much caprice, mean-
 “ nefs and pride combined, added to so much
 “ ill humour.”

I wait, sire, for news of your majesty's health with the same eagerness as the Jews wait for their Messiah, and the Jansenists for saving grace. If you have not time to write a word to me, let me know by message that you are well. This is the only thing which interests me, and it seems to me that—*the king is in good health*—may soon be written. I ask to know nothing more.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXVI,

From the King.

Undated.

THANKS, marquis, for what you have sent. I have nothing disagreeable to inform you of to-day; on the contrary, I have cause of

consolation, and a prospect of hope to communicate to you. Broglia has just repassed the Maine, and has left only two thousand men at Cassel; so that this act of moderation once more announces pacific dispositions in France.

The Austrians continue to be seriously alarmed for their possessions in Italy; the revolt in Hungary continues; the court begins to assume peaceful inclinations, and there is every appearance that this cruel and fatal war is drawing to a conclusion. Thus are my hopes somewhat revived, and I am inspired with momentary cheerfulness, which is so much gained from the enemy.

I am here employing myself in loading my memory and unloading my ass, that I may lighten the literary burthen of which he has the honour to be the bearer. I am on the point of ending the perusal of De Thou; his book is well written and has given me satisfaction.

The remarks of Voltaire seem to me to be tolerably just, except that they are too severe. Say what we will, if the history of Voltaire be not instructive, it is at least pleasing. It is a charming miniature, painted by Corregio; and certainly none of us would wish the work to be suppressed.

I soon

I soon hope to send you good news of our expedition into Vogtland, an account of which I every moment expect to receive.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Sleep in repose. Let nothing trouble your security for some weeks, and we shall then see what is to be done. I embrace you.

Farewel.

L E T T E R LXXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

September, 1760.

NO one could be more rejoiced than I was at the receipt of the two last letters which your majesty has done me the favour to write to me. I begin, at length, to conceive real hopes of once more seeing you tranquilly enjoying, at Potsdam and Sans-Souci, the superb embellishments which you there have executed.

I cannot comprehend for what reason the French, when they might have done prince Ferdinand so much mischief, should think proper to retreat, and give him time to recover himself, and fortify his army in a good post, did they not suppose

suppose the approach of peace. The inaction of the English fleet, likewise, appears to me to accord with the retreat of the French.* The facility too with which you raise your troops will contribute to peace.

Your majesty has said nothing to me of an exchange*, which it is here affirmed will take place. But how may we rely on newspapers in which it is asserted already to have been begun?

I take the liberty to send your majesty the account of the two gold medals, which must have been remitted to you by M. Eichel. M. Sulzer, the chief of the subscribers, who, having advanced the gold, is in need of a reimbursement, that he may be enabled to strike silver medals, delivered me this account. There are thirty-one gold ducats in each medal, to which must be added twenty-five crowns of the present currency for the subscription of the die. I request your majesty would inform me where the money is to be paid, because it has been advanced from the funds which we have belonging to the subscribers, and the business cannot proceed without that sum.

I believe I shall be able to send you the tragedy of *Tancred*, by Voltaire, this post. The

* Of prisoners, I suppose. T.

versification appears to me very feeble, and profaic; the situations romantic, and often contrary to reason. There are affecting passages, and some individual beauties. He has dedicated his piece to La Pompadour, and his epistle dedicatory is the work of a real knave. That man daily becomes more contemptible. I cannot have the tragedy before to-morrow: the copy I read was not my own, but I will send that which the bookseller is to bring me by the first courier.

I am delighted to find your majesty is pleased with the history of De Thou; he was a man of great good sense, probity, and knowledge, and such are the principal qualities a historian ought to possess.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 19, 1768.

I SHOULD have done myself the honour to write to your majesty the moment you entered Saxony, and that the correspondence with your army became open, but that I supposed you
would

would be, at first, so involved in affairs that it would be to little purpose to increase the important business you have to attend to, by my letters. I now, sire, acquit myself of my duty, and, in a few words, write all that has passed, according to the most exact truth, and as an ocular witness.

About the end of September, an advocate from Glogau arrived at Berlin named Sack, who had been sent by general Tottleben, to terminate his business with the banker Splittgerber. This man having had a private conversation with our governor, the latter appeared to be thunder-struck. For two days he seemed to have heard the most dreadful news. His fears were at length communicated to all Berlin, and, as the cause of them was unknown, it began to be rumoured that your majesty had been mortally wounded.

This false intelligence threw the whole city into the greatest consternation; for my part, I was seized with a fever and convulsions. I had received a letter from your majesty, dated the eighteenth; but it was affirmed you had been wounded on the nineteenth: at length, for my happiness, and that of the whole city, M. Kœppen received one of your letters, dated the twenty-first, and the minds of the people were calmed.

On

On the morrow, all the generals assembled, and it was known that the terrors of the governor had been excited by the dread of an irruption of the Russians into Brandenburg. Three days after, general Tottleben appeared at our gates, and summoned the city. As he had none but irregular troops, defence was resolved upon, and he played upon us with red-hot balls and bombs, from five o'clock in the evening to three in the morning. Two assaults were made, at two different gates, but were both repelled, with loss to the enemy, by our garrison battalions.

It is here necessary, sire, that I should do that justice which every citizen in Berlin owes to general Seidlitz, and general Knobloch. These two men, who both are wounded, have saved your metropolis, and passed the night at the battery of the gates that were attacked. Old marshal Lehwald also did every thing of which his great age would admit.

The day after the bombardment, the prince of Wirtemberg came up with his corps; but the men were so fatigued that they could not attack the Russians before the morrow. They were driven off as far as Kœpenick, and it was determined to attack them on the next day; but, as it was known that they had been reinforced

forced by the corps of Czernichef, and by that of general Lascy, retreat was resolved on, and the city suffered to capitulate, which certainly would have been taken and pillaged by the Austrians, while our army should have attacked the Russians. Accordingly the corps of the prince of Wirtemberg, and that under general Hulsen, filed off, during night, through the city, on their march for Spandau.

The great quantity of baggage that was to pass the bridge, and a cannon that broke down on the road, with some other impediments, were the cause that the second battalion of Wunsch suffered much, and that we lost about a hundred and fifty chaffeurs. On his arrival at Spandau, the prince found the place wholly unprepared. Captain Zechlin, and some other officers, were the persons who placed the artillery on the ramparts, and acted as gunners.

The prince of Wirtemberg continued his march toward Brandenburg, and left captain Zechlin with a battalion of convalescent men at Spandau. The Russians did not dare to attack this place. We imagined we should have had both their company and that of the Austrians some time longer at Berlin, when they departed with the utmost speed, and even with confusion. While they were in the city, count Reuss, the

only one of your ministers who ventured to remain at Berlin, rendered the city many services, by acting in concert with the generals, whenever it was necessary so to do, without fear of being taken as a hostage. He was determined to the last to approve himself a good citizen. Nor, while speaking to your majesty of those who displayed zeal for your service, ought I to forget the envoy from Holland, M. Verelst. When I shall have the honour to see your majesty, I will inform you of all he did. In the mean time, sir, I can assure you, with the utmost truth, that, should he live these two hundred years, you, and the kings your successors, could never too much testify your gratitude. Of this your majesty will be convinced, when I shall be able to speak freely to you.

The Austrians stopped the letter which your majesty did me the honour to write, dated Hermannsdorf, August 27th, the original of which they sent to Vienna, and gave several copies of it here. One of these I found means to obtain, and send to your majesty; nor does it contain any thing that is not grand, noble, and virtuous. This letter inspired several of the Austrian generals with a wish to be acquainted with me, but I refused to see any one of them.

I enquired from those who had been in company

pany with these gentlemen, what was the discourse they held; and, according to their general Brentano, they think very highly of general Wunsch, and are delighted that he is taken prisoner.

You already, no doubt, are informed, sire, that they have not committed the least injury at Potsdam, or Sans-Souci. As to Charlottenburg, they there pillaged the tapestry and the pictures: but of these, by a very singular chance, they have left the three which are most beautiful; the two signs of Watteau *, and the portrait of the woman which Pesne painted at Venice. With respect to the antiques, they have merely thrown them down: the hands and arms of some of them indeed are broken; but, as they were found near the figures to which they belonged, they may easily be repaired. They have done no damage to the ceilings or gilding. The housekeeper having been obliged to escape, half dead with fear, in his shirt, to Berlin, I immediately sent, when the Russians retired, one of my servants, with the inspector of the picture gallery, to Charlottenburg. Every thing has been restored to order. The housekeeper returned thither to-day. Thus this pillage has

* Perhaps the two ale-houses, or drinking booths. T.

excited more noise than it has done harm ; and, the furniture and pictures excepted, every thing may be restored to its proper state.

Before I conclude my letter, I must do justice to the whole city of Berlin. During the siege I heard every class, the vulgar, the tradesman, and the noble, exclaiming—"What will our " dear and good king say ?" — It is equally indubitable that I did not hear any complaints from a single person : the object of the public continually was that of *our dear and good king*. Preserve yourself therefore, sire, for subjects so affectionate. While they shall have you for a master, they will think themselves happy, in despite of every accident of fortune which you cannot command. May an honourable peace put an end to public apprehension, and restore to the citizens of Berlin their *dear and good king* !

I am, &c.

P. S. Your majesty no doubt knows the punishment which the Russians inflicted on our news-writers : poor Beaufobre, who was the innocent cause of it, was in danger of dying of his fright.

LETTER LXXXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

THE blows which I last winter apprehended, have fallen upon me. It was this foresight, marquis, that dictated the letters which I have so often written to you on my unfortunate situation. All my philosophy was necessary to enable me to support the misfortunes, the extortions, the outrages, and the whole atrocious scenes, which are passed. I am in full possession of my prophetic faculties, and will inform you what will nearly be the end of our campaign.

We shall recover Leipzig, Wittenberg, Torgau, and Meissen; but the enemy will keep Dresden in Saxony, and the mountains in Silesia; which advantages will, next year, facilitate the means of giving me the finishing blow. I will not tell you what I think, nor what I meditate; but you, no doubt, will imagine to yourself all that passes in my mind, the agitations of my heart, and what my thoughts must be.

Your letter has given me pleasure, could any pleasure be felt in the mischief of hurricane, in times of trouble, in the general subversion of all

order, and amid ravage, death, and destruction. I perceive you have preserved a tranquil mind, while surrounded by the Ursomans* and Austrians, and that your health has been no sufferer. The letter, a copy of which you sent me, is really mine, some errors of style excepted, which have apparently happened in transcribing.

Thus is the end of my life empoisoned ; thus, dear marquis, does fortune sport with weak mortals ; but, weary of her favours and her caprice, I meditate how to procure myself a situation under which I shall have nothing to fear from men or gods.

Adieu, my dear marquis. Live free from fears, and once more read the second book of the Eneid, in which you will find a tolerable picture of the woes which my country has suffered. Write to me, for you have leisure, and do not forget me.

* Or Bears.

L E T T E R XC.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 22, 1763.

I HOPE your majesty has received the long letter I had the honour to write to you two days since, in which I took the liberty to inform you of every thing I myself had seen, during the short irruption which our enemies made to Berlin. Their ill will produced but little effect; and the things they had sold or scattered are daily recovered.

What now employs the city is the impossibility that half the inhabitants should pay their part of the contribution. M. Gottskowsky, who has distinguished himself by the zeal he displayed in behalf of your majesty's interests, and of those of the public, goes to lay a plan before your majesty, by which many families will escape ruin, and which will be no burthen either to you or to the state; I therefore doubt not but it will meet your approbation. Certain it is that, if the contribution must be paid, in addition to that which has already been paid to general Haddick, more than six or seven thousand people will leave Berlin; for it has been computed that a workman, who earns six or seven crowns

per month, must be obliged to pay more than forty crowns; and even, should means be found to prevent these people from leaving Berlin, a part of their effects must be sold to pay the tax.

All this will be avoided by the plan which the principal citizens and magistrates have formed, and which a king, who loves his subjects, by whom he is adored, cannot but approve. You, sire, must have seen what I said in my last letter, relative to this; and I can solemnly and most sacredly assure you that flattery had no part in my discourse: it was the pure and simple truth.

All Canada we hear is taken; and the English may call home forty ships of war, and twelve or fifteen thousand men, from America; for they certainly can have no fears that the French, not having a fleet, should be able to send a new army into America. We shall see what they will do. Your majesty knows better than I do, whether or no they merit your praise. With respect to myself, to me it seems that ten thousand men of the allies detached into Saxony would have prevented the irruption of the Austrians, and have preserved Saxony, which you will soon recover in despite of all your enemies.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XCI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

YOU imagine my mind to be much more at ease than it is; I am overloaded with business, and the close of the campaign is not a thing so easy to effect as you suppose. My success or my losses will decide on the contributions of Berlin. Should I be fortunate, Berlin will not pay a sixpence; should I be the reverse, as usual, we will think on what can be done for the ease of the people. This is all I am able to say.

Whatever colouring you may give to the attempts of my enemies, and the calamities of the country, do not flatter yourself that I have not a clear perspective through those clouds with which you believe you cover misfortunes that are real, and destructive. My latter end is empoisoned by affliction, and my setting sun as fatal as was the morning of my life. Neither the success of the English, nor the advantages of prince Ferdinand, can counterbalance the fearful situations in which I have this year been. Next year, all will be to begin again. Do
what

what I will, I foresee, the number of my enemies considered, that, should I resist on one side, I must fall on the other. I cannot hope for aid, diversion, peace, or any thing on earth.

You will therefore confess that a wise man, after having for a certain time wrestled with misfortune, ought not obstinately to oppose his ill star, and that true courage has a more short and glorious means of ridding itself of afflictions. I send poor Gottskowsky back much the same as he came; I can determine on nothing within a fortnight. The campaign must, in one mode or other, first be concluded. This is the time which I have prescribed to myself, and on which depends, as you perceive, a part of that destiny which futurity conceals.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget me, but remain a tranquil spectator of all which it shall please fate and the brutal rage of our enemies to inflict upon us.

L E T.

L E T T E R XCII.

From the King.

October 28, 1760.

CALL my sentiments what you please, my dear marquis ; but I perceive we shall never agree in opinion, and that we reason from very different principles. You delight in the life of a Sybarite, and I regard death as a Stoic. I will never see the moment which shall oblige me to sign a disadvantageous peace ; no persuasion, no eloquence, can induce me to sign my own dishonour. Either I will suffer myself to be buried under the ruins of my country ; or, should this consolation be thought too kind by persecuting fate, I will put an end to my misfortunes, when I find it impossible to support them longer. I have acted, and I continue to act, according to those internal motives, and that point of honour, which direct all my steps ; my conduct on every occasion shall conform to these principles. After having sacrificed my youth to my father, and my manhood to my country, I think I have a right to dispose of my old age. I have said, and I repeat, never shall my hand sign a disgraceful peace. I will
finish

finish this campaign, undoubtedly, with a determination to dare every thing, and to make the most desperate attempts either to obtain success, or find a glorious death.

I have written some remarks on the military talents of Charles XII ; but have not examined whether he ought or ought not to have killed himself. I think, after the taking of Stralsund, he would have done wisely to have closed the scene. But, let him have acted or omitted what he may, his example is no rule to me. There are men who are submissive to fortune ; I was not born so to be : and, having lived for others, I wish to die for myself. Exceedingly indifferent concerning what may be said, I will even pledge myself never to hear it. Henry IV. was a younger son of a good family, who made his fortune ; this was no reason that he should hang himself. Louis XIV. was a great monarch with great resources, and relieved himself from his difficulties. I do not equal him in power, but honour is more dear to me than it was to him ; and, as I have told you, I do not regulate my conduct after that of any man.

We say five thousand years have passed since the creation of the world, which calculation I believe to be very inadequate to the age of this earth.

earth. Brandenburg subsisted all this time before I was born, and will continue to subsist when I shall be no more. Kingdoms are supported by the propagation of mankind, and so will be, while pleasure is annexed to the multiplication of men. The crowd will be governed either by ministers or by monarchs, which is nearly the same thing. A little more wisdom, or a little more folly, are shades so feeble as scarcely to be perceptible to a whole people. Do not, therefore, my dear marquis, retail upon me these common-place maxims of courtiers, nor imagine that the prejudices of self-love and vanity can impose upon me, or effect the least possible change of opinion. It is no act of weakness to put an end to an unfortunate life, but judicious policy, which persuades us that the most fortunate condition for man is that in which no person can injure him, or trouble his repose.

How many reasons has a man of fifty to despise life! The remaining prospect is infirm and painful age, chagrin, regret, ignominy, and outrage, which are to be endured. If you will but truly enter into my situation, you ought not to condemn my projects in the manner you do. I have lost all my friends, my dearest relations. I am in every respect as unfortunate

as man can be. I have nothing to hope ; I see my enemies treat me with derision, and their pride is preparing to tread me under feet. Alas ! marquis,

*Quand on a tout perdu, quand on n'a plus d'espoir,
La vie est un opprobre, et la mort un devoir *.*

I have nothing to add to this. I inform your curiosity that the day before yesterday we passed the Elbe, and that to-morrow we shall march toward Leipzig, where I intend to be on the 31st, and where I hope we shall have a battle ; if we have, you shall receive such information as time and chance shall bring forth.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; do not forget me, but be assured of my esteem.

• L E T T E R X C I I I .

From the King.

Torgau, November 5, 1760.

I HAVE this day, the 5th of November, received a letter from you, my dear mar-

* When all is lost, and hope is no more, life is a disgrace, and death a duty.

I

quis,

quis, dated on the 25th of September. You perceive our correspondence is very irregular. Oh God! How many things have happened since that time!

We have just beaten the Austrians. Both armies have lost a prodigious number of men. The victory will perhaps afford us some tranquillity during winter, and nothing more: next year all will be to begin again.

A ball has grazed the top of my breast, but the wound is only a contusion; some pain without danger, which does not prevent me from acting as usual.

I am occupied in making many necessary arrangements; in fine, I will end the campaign to the best of my abilities, which is all that can be required of me; in other respects my manner of thinking is the same as it was eight days ago.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget me, but be certain of my friendship.

L E T T E R XCIV.

From the King.

Meissen, November 10, 1760.

YOU ought before this to be informed of every thing that relates to me, from the letter which I sent from Torgau. By this you will have learned, my dear marquis, that my contusion was not dangerous; the ball had lost a part of its force in making its way through a thick pelisse, and a velvet coat, which I wore; so that the sternum was strong enough to resist its impulse. This I can assure you was to me an affair of small moment, my whole thoughts being bent on death or victory.

I have driven the Austrians as far as the gates of Dresden, where they occupy their camp of last year, my whole science being insufficient to dislodge them. The city it is said is destitute of magazines; should this be true, famine may effect what the sword cannot. Should however these people obstinately remain in their position, I shall see myself obliged to pass the present winter, like the preceding, in cantonments excessively confined; and the troops will all be employed

to form a line, that we may keep footing in Saxony.

This it must be owned is a very gloomy prospect, and an ill reward for the immense fatigues and labours which the campaign has cost. My only support amid so many contradictions is philosophy. This is the staff on which I lean, my sole consolation in these times of trouble and general subversion.

You will perceive, my dear marquis, that I am not inflated by success; I relate things as they really are. The world, perhaps, dazzled by the splendor of victory, will judge otherwise.

De loin on nous envie, ici nous gémissons.*

This is what happens oftener than is imagined; of that be assured. To be properly estimated, things should be closely inspected. Act in what manner I will, the numbers of my enemies overwhelm me: this is the cause of my misfortunes, and of every thing afflicting that has befallen me, which it was not possible to avoid.

I do not imagine I shall see you this winter, unless Europe should entertain more pacific sentiments: for this I wish, but dare not flatter myself it will be so. We have saved our reputation

* Though envied at a distance, here we groan and weep.

by the battle of the 3d; do not, however, suppose our enemies are so weakened as to be obliged to make peace. The affairs of prince Ferdinand are in an ill train; and I fear the French will this winter preserve those advantages which they have gained over him during the campaign.

In fine, all objects appear as dark as if I were inclosed in a tomb. Have some compassion on my present situation; recollect I make use of no disguise, except that I do not relate all my apprehensions, embarrassments, and griefs.

Adieu, dear marquis. Write to me occasionally; and do not forget a poor devil who, ten times a day, curses his fatal existence, and who wishes he were in those abodes from which no man returns, to bring intelligence.

L E T T E R XCV.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Uckerisdorff,
November 16, 1760.

I PERCEIVE I am made to speak and write when I have least thought of so doing. I have not written to Seidlitz since the day of
the

the battle; and the news of our pretended continuation of success has certainly been sent by some person whom I know not. We have taken some prisoners, but the number only approaches eight thousand men, and not twelve thousand; nor shall we take Dresden, but shall pass a disagreeable and vexatious winter; and every thing must again be begun with the beginning year.

These are truths, however disagreeable; and in these you may place more faith than in the popular rumours, which are purposely spread, either that they may reach the ear and intimidate the enemy, or to revive a spark of hope in the people, and inspire them with courage. The following line, from Semiramis, you may apply to us :

Ailleurs on nous envie, ici nous gémissons.*

We are obliged to make ourselves frontiers, by laying waste a part of the country, to prevent the enemy from molesting us in our winter quarters. We shall not be able to quit the field before the end of the month. Imagine what must be the fatigues and vexations I support; judge what my difficulties must be, by

* See the translation in the last letter. T.

representing to yourself that I am obliged to subsist and pay my army by industry.

Add to this, I have no company; I am deprived of the society of every person I love, and am myself reduced to pass my life in dividing my time between fruitless labours and innumerable fears. This is no flattering picture; but it paints things as they are, and shews how disagreeable is my situation.

How different is it, my dear marquis, to view these objects at a distance, through a deceitful prism by which they are embellished; and to examine them closely, naked as they are, and stripped of their tinsel ornaments! Vanity of vanities! Vanity of victories! With this sentence of the sage do I conclude; it comprehends all things, and in itself contains reflections which every man ought to make, but which seldom are made.

Adieu, dear marquis. Be not so credulous in your belief of public reports, but continue your friendship to me.

LE T.

L E T T E R XCVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, November 28, 1760.

HOW could your majesty imagine that, sick or well, I should hesitate a moment to repair to Leipzig, there to have the happiness to see you? Were I unable to travel in a coach, I would be carried in a litter; nothing should prevent me from enjoying a pleasure which I have so much desired to enjoy. I will therefore depart the very moment I shall receive your orders; and will remain with you, if you please, not only some weeks, but three months. I shall only require your permission to depart, and return to Berlin, at the beginning of March; because that, for these five years, I have been subject to a chronic disease, which never fails to visit me about the middle of March. It is an effervescence of the humours, with some fits of fever. When I keep myself warm, and observe a severe regimen, I only am indisposed for about three weeks; but, should I not take every necessary precaution, the humour would fall upon the intestines, and produce very serious accidents, such as those which at Breslau, and the

year afterward at Hamburg, brought me to the brink of the grave.

I know that to a hero, like you, death appears an object of the utmost indifference. But you never saw the spectre except under the form of fame; were you to behold him accompanied by the dysentery and diarrhea, you would confess that the most intrepid grenadier would tremble at a death so disagreeable.

You, sire, are a victorious king, but not a king prophet; and I well perceive you better understand the art of gaining battles than that of making predictions. In one of your rapturous fits, you foretold the Austrians would keep the post of Landshut; and M. de Catt yesterday informed me of the good news which has arrived, that your troops had occupied this advantageous post. We conversed much concerning your majesty, whom he loves with all his heart. But where is the man who does not love you?

M. de Catt departs to-day with M. Gottskowsky, who every day is taking additional trouble to regulate the affairs of Berlin. He is really a man of an excellent heart, and a worthy citizen. Would you had many like him! The greatest gift fortune can bestow on a kingdom, is that of a citizen zealous for the good of the public, and of his master; and, to the honour of
the

the city of Berlin be it said, I have in the most critical times seen many of its inhabitants whose virtues the historians of old Rome would have recorded to all posterity, had they lived in their times.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XCVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 23, 1761.

I BEGIN by thanking your majesty for the favours with which you have deigned to honour me; indeed every letter I write ought to begin thus. What moment of my life is there that is not distinguished by some act of kindness which you have done me? You have rendered it impossible for me ever to deserve your benefactions; I have no means of repaying them but with gratitude, which, sire, I shall eternally preserve.

I have been to Sans-Souci; the palace is in very good order, as is the garden likewise; and with respect to the gallery, St. Peter's at Rome excepted, it is past dispute the finest in the world. My surprize at seeing it was extreme,

nor could I ever have believed it would have produced half the effect. It is now entirely finished.

I wait with impatience, fire, which you know to be constitutional in me, for news of the taking of Caffel, of which I flatter myself your majesty will inform me. I have already made my arrangements for the feast which I mean to give to fifty invalids.

I hope your majesty will not forget the tragedy of Malagrida. I am now reading three volumes composed from the different pieces which the king of Portugal has caused to be published, and which make me shudder with horror. I am tempted to write two sermons, in the character of a quaker, to shew how happy is that religion which does not admit of priests. These wretched times are equally unfortunate, view them on what side we will; whether we consider them as productive of the most cruel wars, or examine the political engines that are put in motion, or those played by the court of Rome, worthy of hell itself.

From the pieces which the court of Portugal has published, the Pope appears to be a great fool; and his minister, cardinal Torregiani, one of the most wicked men in Europe. As you will certainly have something to transact with him

him at the conclusion of peace, I hope you will make him sensible of the respect which a priest in red breeches owes to kings. You are equally formed to avenge, as you are to combat and vanquish, your fellow monarchs.

Here is a Letter, written, as it should seem, by a French officer, against the Universal History of Voltaire: I imagine you will think the censures that relate to war tolerably good; the remainder appear to me to be either false or feeble.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

VANITY of vanities! Vanity of politics! This apophthegm of the sage, which I, unworthy as I am, cite, is very applicable, my dear marquis, to our fine political reasonings, which we this winter made at Leipzig; so true is it that what appears most probable has often the least veracity.

The Austrians have twice changed their plan

of campaign, since I have been here. I do not, I assure you, remain with my arms crossed, but am determined to oppose every wound which the enemy wishes to inflict. Do not imagine we shall this year have peace; in despite of the most conclusive arguments, in despite of so many probabilities, peace there will be none. Should fortune not forsake me, I will rid myself of my difficulties to the best of my power. And must I then continue this year to dance on the rope, and vault dangerously, whenever it shall please their Apostolic, most Christian, and most Muscovite Majesties to say, Dance, marquis * ?

You reason very well relative to the circumcised. Oh ! How hard is the human heart ! It is said I have friends ; yes, and excellent friends they are, who very peaceably stand still and say—" I wish you every happiness."—" But " I am drowning ; throw me a rope !"—" No, " you will not be drowned."—" Nay, but I am " absolutely sinking !"—" We hope the contrary ; and, if you should disappear, be persuaded we will write you a very fine epitaph."

Such, marquis, is the world, and such are the very fine compliments paid me on all sides. The happy genius of our monarchy, and almost miraculous good fortune, must be our allies ; add to

* That is, of Brandenburg. T.

these our arms, our legs, vigilance, activity, valour, and perseverance. With this aid we may find the equilibrium of the tottering scales, though Mr. Pitt has not been able to discover the centre of gravity. Such recollections occasion me to consign myself over to Lucifer four times per day; I then return to my Gassendi, next to my third book of Lucretius; and thus is a very singular combat between ambition and philosophy maintained in my mind.

I am so busy at present with a hundred thousand regulations, that I scarcely remember Sans-Souci: I know not whether I shall ever see it more. But you, my dear marquis, you and philosophy are my consolation, my asylum, and my glory!

That I may send you some news, however, that may interest you, I must inform you that we shall remain tranquil on this side till the 15th of July; and that, should fortune smile on me between this and then, I may strike a blow such as our enemies expect the least. You will soon know what it is. Every thing has been well weighed; we have but to see whether the execution will correspond.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

P. S. Pardon, my dear marquis, the bad writing, and the negligence of the style: when a man

is possessed by the devil, he neither writes in the elegiac nor the Attic taste.

L E T T E R XCIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 28, 1761.

I TAKE the liberty to send your majesty the Letter on Voltaire which I had the honour to mention to you the last time I wrote. The copy that had been lent me was asked for again, nor could I obtain one from the booksellers before to-day.

We have ill news here concerning the check which the army under prince Ferdinand has met with, but I hope the evil is not half so great as it is reported to be; had not Cassel been taken, this would have been very vexatious.

To counterpoise this bad intelligence, we have a relation at Berlin of the advantage gained by general Syburg over the army of the Empire, which consoles us in some measure for the misfortune of the allies

The zeal I have for your majesty obliges me to speak what I think. While M. de Catt shall remain

remain with you, it is certain that you will possess one of the most worthy of men. The most profound secrecy will be kept relative to your literary occupations; nor will the curiosity of the public, and of numerous individuals, be gratified as it formerly has been. The most secret pieces which you composed, four or five years ago, are now in the possession of a hundred people. M. de Catt, sire, knows not, nor will he ever know, the justice I do him: but I have more essential reasons than you perhaps may imagine for giving you this information; and your majesty may well believe I do not speak thoughtlessly, or without foundation, on such a subject. Never admit a man whom you have not proved into your interior apartments.

I hope your majesty continues in good health, and that you will this year gain every advantage that fortitude, courage, and prudence can deserve over your foes. I am still convinced that all will be well; and that, after having resisted Europe combined, yours will be the glory to conclude a good and honourable peace.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R C.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, April 1, 1761.

YOUR edition is proceeding with all speed, and you may be certain of having it about the 12th of this month. It is very fortunate that we possess a copy of your works, as they were printed at the palace; for that which you have sent us of the Dutch edition is full of errors, and mutilated words. You have read it hastily; and it has happened to you as to all authors, who, knowing their works by rote, scarcely can perceive errors of the press. Whenever we discover one, we recur to my copy, and according to that we correct.

I know not, sire, whether you have been informed that the divines of Amsterdam have deliberated concerning preaching against your work, and their intention so to do has been announced in all the papers. This rumour, however ridiculous it may be, has induced me to change a single word in the Epistle to Marshal Keith, for it is that against which they declaim the loudest. The word I allude to is in the following line :

Allez.

*Allez, lâches Chrétiens, que les feux éternels, &c.**

The word *Chrétiens* must absolutely be erased, for it would offend all the foolish part of Europe, who outnumber the wise more than a hundred to one. I was exceedingly perplexed concerning the alteration. I first intended to have substituted *Allez, lâches mortels*; but the word *mortels* rhymes with *éternels*: this would have been a fault, because the hemistich ought not to rhyme with the end of the line. The words *bigots* and *dévots* want dignity. At last I wrote the line thus:

Allez, mortels craintifs, que les feux éternels, &c.†

I should gladly have waited for your majesty's correction; but it could not have arrived in time, and the edition must have been delayed. Should you not be satisfied, you may send me a different reading, and the leaf may be cancelled, which will be the work of half an hour; but I entreat your majesty to erase the word *Chrétiens*. You have the probity, the courage, and the wit of Julian: but when he treated the Christians as cowards, three fourths of the empire still remained pagans; whereas,

* Cowardly Christians, let fires eternal, &c.

† Fearful mortals, &c.

at present, there is not a man from Lisbon to Archangel who does not call himself Christian. If I, who have the honour to be the high priest of your majesty's sect, think this word offensive, what effect must it produce on the mind of a catholic, or a zealous protestant ?

I now come to your Ode on the Germans. On the faith of an Epicurean, on the faith of a philosopher, in fine, on the faith of a man who hates falsehood, I never have read any thing which pleased me more. You have written a hundred charming things, full of strength and energy ; but, in my opinion, you have never written better. I have read your work five times, and have five times thought it admirable. The only defects which I imagined I perceived are in a single strophe, which begins thus :

*Ha ! si le sang coulait comme au temps de vos pères, &c. **

This is a beautiful line, as are the three which follow ; but the sense of the fifth seems to me disjointed :

De ces usurpateurs dont le fer s'est soumis, &c. †

This line must be connected with the first ;

* Did blood flow now, as in our fathers' times.

† Of those usurpers whose enslaving swords.

and

and the construction of “Did blood flow now,” must agree with that of the preceding verse :

*De votre liberté, de vos droits, de vos princes,
De ces usurpateurs dont le fer s'est soumis, &c. **

The four last lines of the same strophe appear likewise to me to be feeble, and not to conclude the sense of the first. Precision requires that the word *si* (if) should be followed by the word *mais* (but) :

*Ha ! si le sang coulait comme au temps de vos pères, &c.
Mais il n'est répandu que pour vos tyrans †.*

The use of the word *mais* can easily be avoided, though it must nevertheless be understood.

There is another objectionable line in the same strophe—*Si vos puissans armemens ‡*. The words *puissans* and *armemens* rhyme, and produce a disagreeable sound.

This, fire, is all which the most rigid criticism has to allege : the remainder of your Ode is admirable, and superior to censure, nay, I almost dare say, to cavil ; all is sublime, all is clear, all is bold yet correct ; nor does the ar-

* Of your liberties, your lives, your kings ; of those usurpers whose enslaving swords, &c.

† Did blood flow now, &c. But, ah ! it is for tyrants only shed.

‡ If your powerful armaments.

dour of the thoughts in the least injure the justness of the diction.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R C I .

From the King.

Undated.

THE verse in the Epistle to Marshal Keith may be thus corrected, and there will then be only one word altered :

Allez, lâches humains, que les feux éternels.

Here is the strophe to which you object, such as I have corrected it :

*Ah ! si ce sang coulait comme au temps de vos pères,
Pour abaisser l'orgueil de ces rois sanguinaires,
De ces usurpateurs dont le fer s'est soumis
De vos vastes états les plus riches provinces,
Rivaux toujours jaloux, éternels ennemis
De votre liberté, de vos droits, de vos princes ;
Mais vos cruels armemens
Souillent vos bras parricides,
Guidés par les Euménides,
Du meurtre de vos parens *.*

This

* Did blood flow now, as in our fathers times,
The pride of sanguinary kings t' abase,

And

This, my dear marquis, is all I could do for your service : the fiend of war has at present exorcised the demon of poetry ; and the numerous measures I have to take, and the affairs I have to regulate, absorb almost my whole time. I thank you for the care you have bestowed on the edition which has excited such clamours, which I hope will be some little allayed by the new one ; if not, I shall take comfort, and not indulge in despair.

Adieu, my dear marquis.

L E T T E R CII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, April 4, 1761.

I WILL not tell your majesty how much I have been grieved at the news of the raising

And of usurpers, whose enslaving fwords
The richest districts of your states have conquered,
Eternal rivals, and eternal foes
To freedom, arts, and kings, that once were yours,
'Twere something then ; but now, like parricides,
Your bloody falchions, which the furies wield
In rage, alight on those who gave you life.

of the siege of Cassel; you will from yourself imagine what I have suffered; but I have seen so many disagreeable events happily repaired, during this war, that I flatter myself it will once more be the same.

M. Gottskowsky is returned from the Russians, where he has encountered considerable sufferings and dangers. He supposed he would have been arrested as a hostage: but this was one of the least of his troubles, for he was several times in danger of death. He is really a brave and good citizen. He has concluded the affair of the contribution, concerning which I must recal to your majesty's recollection what I wrote to you six months ago. Should the contribution be raised in the manner of that which was paid to Haddick, more than ten thousand souls will quit Berlin; for they will prefer to go and seek their fortune elsewhere, to the act of paying a sum equivalent to all they can earn in two years.

I fear lest no man in place should have represented this truth to your majesty; but the zeal I have for your person will not permit me to dissimble. I entreat your pardon for the liberty I take; but it has been occasioned by my perceiving the present state of affairs, and how many people have prepared to quit the country:

try: silence therefore would have been guilt. There is a means of paying the contribution without becoming burthenfome either to your majesty, or to the metropolis; and the project which the merchants, who have advanced great sums, have formed, appears to me to be a good one, and easy of execution. You, sire, however, will judge a hundred times better than I can of this business, and will always act for the best. May heaven preserve you for your faithful subjects and servants, and all will then be well.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, April 17, 1761.

WE shall not fail to insert the errata, but most of the errors had been corrected by cancels; nor will you now find the word *pies* (feet) instead of *genoux* (knees). What can a poor corrector of the press do with such wretched printers? He reads three revises, renders the sheet correct, and the compositor who is to

alter the last proof, lets a line fall, scatters the letters, and the corrector is in despair.

One of the journeymen printers thought proper, on his own authority, to correct the word *genoux*, and to insert that of *pieds*; telling his comrades that he understood the French, and that he well knew what he was doing. To prevent things like these, it is necessary permission should be given to punish such wretches.

The second edition has been begun, the first having been bought up before it was finished, by those who had previously purchased the copies. More than half of that edition is already printed, in which there are none of the faults that there were in the first.

I have been four days in search, sire, of your Chinese Letters, but none of the booksellers have them: they did not know the work. At last one of my friends yesterday brought me a copy, as a new publication; by which it seems that it is come into the hands of the booksellers since I sent to enquire. If your majesty will but cede these six Chinese Letters to me, I will barter six volumes of the Jewish Letters in return. You have perfectly attained the end at which you aimed, which was to load not only with ridicule, but likewise with shame, the pope and the court of Rome. There is nothing superfluous

perfluous in your work, nor any thing forgotten which could render it useful. Pleasantry, if I may use a physical phrase, is the only vehicle which induces the catholic readers to swallow those strong doses that abound in your work, and which, stripped of the ornaments of witty raillery, would have displeased many of your readers. Your Letter on the Election of Popes is charming; nor is that less so which is written on the priests, that each invokes his god, and eats him as he descends. The ceremony of the consecrated sword is peculiarly admirable.

Who can have informed your majesty of all these ridiculous ceremonies? Did I not know that baron von Pölnitz is at Magdeburg, I should have supposed he had revealed all the secrets of the holy mother church, into the bosom of which he has for the third time entered.

The only objection I can find to your work is the manner in which it is printed. You complain of the errors in the edition of the *Poesies Diverses*; but what would you have said, had you seen the Letters of your Mandarin? You cannot have a fatherly affection, if the bowels of your compassion would not have been moved, thus to have seen your child so cruelly lacerated. A new edition is making of

this work at Berlin, which will be much more correct, especially in punctuation.

Notwithstanding all which your majesty has done me the favour to write to me, I am still ready to wager that the French will make peace toward the end of June ; and thus, sire, do I found my hopes :

There are two parties in France, the one for peace, the other for war. The first unfavourable accident that shall happen will occasion the party for peace to exclaim aloud ; the people, the parliaments, the merchants, will all join in chorus : and the party for war will either be entirely overthrown, or at least obliged to yield ; especially under a weak government, which has suffered the parliament of Thoulouse to publish an arret which condemns any one who shall dare to levy taxes, that have not been approved by the parliament, to death.

Your majesty, perhaps, will answer my opinion is founded in the hope that the French will receive some check ; but this hope is to me a certainty : for the accomplishment of it I refer to prince Ferdinand, to Mr. Pitt, and to the English fleets. In fine, sire, the prophecies I make will not be very distant in their accomplishment ; and I consent that your majesty should tell me I am incapable of oracular fury,
or

or of being numbered among the seers, or even the minor prophets, nay among makers of almanacs, if I do not announce the truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R C I V.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

I SHOULD rather speak to you of peace than of our preparations for the campaign; but, not to deceive you, I inform you of things as they are. I have too many indications, and have heard too many anecdotes, to doubt that the queen of Hungary is not bent on war. The cartel has again been infringed, in despite of the solemn engagements that were mutually entered into for its execution. A feature so strong as this, and so evident a want of faith, sufficiently prove that the queen of Hungary, determined to tempt the perils of the campaign, thinks it her interest to deprive me of my imprisoned troops as long as she can.

Nor do I judge from this alone; there are many other circumstances which accord, and discover the mystery of iniquity. Let us therefore

fore leave the people in the flattering hopes of a speedy peace; and, though undeceived yourself, let them remain in error.

I expect nearly the same events which happened to us last year, without knowing whether we shall have the same good fortune. One fatal moment may overthrow the edifice which we have hitherto sustained, well or ill, by labours immense. But let these things be as it shall please heaven; I enter the campaign like a man who throws himself into the sea head foremost. To endeavour to foresee all the ill that can happen, would be to engender hypochondria; to take no foresight, would be to be guilty of the error of being caught unprovided. I say to myself that all the good that is hoped, or ill that is feared, never literally comes to pass; from each we must make large abatements. Let me add my enemies are so numerous, that I can only make a war of observation, and let the labours of the day suffice for the day itself. So much for military politics.

I pass at present to the subject of your letter, in which you speak of the new tragedy of Voltaire. I have read it once more, and find affecting situations in it, which he has employed to advantage; but I certainly do not declare myself the partisan of his alternate verses. I

know

know not what effect they may produce on the stage, but in the closet they appear to me prosaic, and in some parts in the opera style. The piece in general is not good; the opening of the plot is embroiled; there is much useless reasoning; some of the characters are ill supported, and ill marked; few of the sententious lines are worthy of being committed to memory; and there is a want of probability, in more than one passage, which offends and shocks the reader. I believe, should Voltaire live much longer, he will put his Universal History into madrigals, or epigrams. True it is, dotage is apparent in his tragedy; but you must allow it is the dotage of a great man. Justice should be done, and the homage rendered to his genius which is its due.

I have seen an anonymous criticism on his Universal History, the author of which I suppose to be a Jansenist; for he dwells much on religion, and on various indifferent opinions which Voltaire has maintained. It might be passable, had not the author been so full of gall, and had he softened some offensive expressions.

I am really ashamed, my dear marquis, of the letter I write to you: instead of fighting, and preparing for my campaign, I write an analysis on new works. This brings to my recollection

collection what was said by the tire-woman of Anne of Austria to Louis XIII. who was stringing pearls—"You are acquainted, sire, with every trade except your own."—Forgive me this proof of erudition, and the dulness of my long letter, remembering the esteem and friendship which I shall ever preserve for you.

Adieu.

L E T T E R C V.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, April 23, 1761.

THE last letter of your majesty has assuaged the affliction which the two preceding had incited; that in which your majesty mentioned the expedition into Hesse, and the other in which you informed me that the cartel had been infringed. With respect to the affair of Hesse, I at present regard it, notwithstanding the ill success it has had, as exceedingly useful; because I have no doubt but the loss of the magazines, and the money requisite to form others, in a country entirely ruined and laid waste, are among the reasons which have induced the French to offer a suspension of arms, at a
time

time when they appeared to be so much superior in numbers to prince Ferdinand.

With respect to the infringement of the cartel, I very frankly tell your majesty, it is what I always thought would happen. The history of the three last ages has taught me to know the house of Austria. The basis of her system rests on falsehood, which she has always employed, even on occasions when there was no need of any such resource. I am well convinced it was hoped at Vienna that you would recruit your army with less ardour, should you depend upon an exchange of prisoners. But your majesty was not the dupe of this ill-conceived artifice; and I am well assured that the Austrians will lose more than you by an infringement of the cartel.

Nothing, sire, is now to be feared on the side of Halberstadt, Magdeburg, and the new March; so that you may employ yourself against your remaining enemies. The inactivity of the French is excellent, both at present, and in the effects which it will incontrovertibly produce. After the step which the French have taken in offering peace to England, they will not stop short in their plans to please the Austrians, who cannot but be in despair to see the negotiation with the English begun. Such was the end of
 2 the

the league of Cambray, and such it has ever been my opinion will be the end of this war.

From the manner in which your majesty is pleased to express yourself, I perceive you mean immediately to open the campaign, and to acquire new glory till your enemies shall be obliged to be more reasonable.—While you, sire, are making marches and countermarches, and while you are gaining battles, I am translating Plutarch, to the best of my abilities, that you may read it in language that will appear to you more supportable than the old French of Amiot. I take the liberty to employ your copyist, who lives in my house, where all his wants shall be provided for. I mean to pass the summer in a country house, five miles from Berlin, and there to work undisturbed. My landlord has thought proper to sell the house which I inhabit at Berlin; and, since I must remove, I shall immediately transport all my furniture to Potsdam. With respect to myself, I have accepted an offer which has been made me of a country house between Potsdam and Barnewitz, where I may walk and breathe a pure air.

Your majesty need harbour no fears concerning the letters I shall have the honour to write to you. This excepted, till I have the honour to see you once more, I will speak of no

subjects but those of literature. When I depart for the country, which will be in about twelve or fifteen days, I will take care to inform your majesty; but your letters may be addressed to me at Berlin, whence they will be sent by the master of the post-office to Barnewitz, from which place I shall be distant only a quarter of a mile.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 16, 1761.

THE public papers all affirm that your majesty is happily arrived in Silesia; and that, at your approach, your enemies have retreated toward Bohemia. I have no doubt that you will make a successful campaign, worthy of a hero like you; and that Fortune would blush were she not finally to reward your constancy and valour.

The gazettes have said that Voltaire had obtained leave to return to Paris; but the intelligence is not confirmed. Had the report been true, the repeal would have been occasioned by a very bad book. I would rather suffer banishment

ment to the end of my existence, than once to have conceived the thought of such a work.

I am busy at my translation of Plutarch, and I hope a great part of it will be finished by the beginning of next year. I have you continually before my eyes; and, while writing, incessantly repeat to myself, “Beware—what will his majesty say?”

To-morrow I depart for the country; your majesty will continue to do me the favour to address the letters you shall please to honour me with to Berlin; and M. Jordan, the post-master, will deliver them faithfully.

I hope your majesty enjoys good health. Exercise and occupation will dissipate the humours which have been occasioned by the sedentary life of the winter: I am therefore determined to follow the advice of your majesty in this respect; for I perceive I am more or less ill in my stomach, according to the more or less exercise I take. Do not, however, propose to give me a company in a free battalion, unless you shall first stipulate with your enemies not to fight before eleven o’clock in the morning.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CVII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

I HEAR with great pleasure that you are gone into the country; if you will but take exercise it will contribute to your health, and you will live more tranquilly there than at Berlin. I return you thanks for not having forgotten the translation of Plutarch, which I requested you to undertake. You will render an important service to the republic of letters, and to all lovers of antiquity *. Pray heaven that peace may precede the finishing of your work; my fears are that it will be much otherwise. I am as incredulous, relative to the pacific sentiments of certain powers, as you are respecting the holy vial. I foresee rivers of blood must still be shed; and that fortune, to which all the powers commit their destiny, must magisterially decide. Sing her some holy madrigal, my dear marquis; repeat

* The French themselves are so well satisfied with the translation of Plutarch, by Amiot, that, notwithstanding its obsolete style, they prefer it to any other that has since been made, and reprinted it at Paris in the year 1784. T.

her the end of your breviary ; and endeavour, if possible, to render her propitious. I promise her a statue of gold, in imitation of the little statue which the Roman emperors preserved so carefully in the chapel of their lares.

Adieu, marquis; do not forget me; and remain persuaded of the esteem in which I hold you.

L E T T E R CVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potfdam, June 6, 1761.

I HAVE had the honour to receive one of your letters at Havelberg, the next day another at Rattenow, and I now answer yours from Potfdam. My fpafms in the ftomach had become fo frequent, that the phyficians advifed me to make a journey for ten or twelve days, to fhake myfelf, and afterward to take the waters for a fortnight. Accordingly I went to Fehrbellin, from Fehrbellin to Kyritz, from Kyritz to Havelberg, from Havelberg to Rathenow, from Rathenow to Barnewitz, and from Barnewitz I am returned to Potfdam.

This journey of ten days has given me relief, and I fhall be obliged to your majefty not to
take

take it amiss that I drink the waters of Sans-Souci for a fortnight, that is to say, till the 22d of June; after which I shall return to Berlin, or, guided by circumstances, shall remain at Potsdam, till I can have the happiness of once more seeing your majesty; nor do I think this fortunate day very distant.

M. de Bussi is at London, and my lord Stanley * is at Paris; and it is my opinion these negociators will travel with more speed than those of the congress of Augsbург.

The gazettes are full of nothing but your treaty with the Turks; and they even add that you have received an envoy from the Ottoman Porte in your camp. What makes me suspect the intelligence is that your majesty has not mentioned a word of the Mussulman ambassador, though I have the honour to be a great partisan of St. Mahomet, and have visited, with exemplary devotion, the seven imperial mosques of Constantinople. Should the servants of the prophet become useful to us, I will consent to make the pilgrimage of Mecca and Medina; but, if Christian princes would but be reasonable, I should prefer peace to the advantage of seeing the messenger of God, and of bringing home a

* Not my lord, Mr. Stanley. T.

corner of the cloth which covers the camel which annually bears a copy of the Alcoran to Mecca.

Pondicherry must be taken since the last battle which the French have lost under the walls of that town. Belleisle is at the last gasp. The town is taken, and nothing but the citadel remains, which cannot be succoured. These events should naturally promote the negotiations at London and at Paris.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CIX.

From the King.

Kunzendorff, June 7, 1761.

HERE we are, my dear marquis, still in the same situation. This profound calm may perhaps be the harbinger of a violent tempest. This the end of the month may announce. I am prepared for good fortune or for ill. Sing a short hymn, however, to this same fortune, of whose protection we are in so much need. The queen of Hungary is determined on war. I have five years served as a breast-plate, to darts hurled

hurled by the court of Vienna, and to the barbarity of her troops and those of her allies. To suffer continually is a rigorous sentence; and I feel that revenge, according to the saying of the Italians, may be a divine pleasure; we must only be careful to seize the moment. My philosophy has met with such rude assaults that it sometimes forsakes me. Whoever, after having been insulted as I have been, should still have the power over himself to pardon his enemies, without dissimulation, would be canonized. For my part, willing to cede my place in the legend to the first candidate, I confess my feeble virtue cannot attain this state of perfection; and that I should die satisfied, could I, but in part, avenge the wrongs I have suffered. But this must be as my good angel, chance, or fortune, shall please. In the mean time, till fate shall issue her commands, I remain tranquil and solitary. I reflect, since reflect I must, on the future; and read, and employ myself in silence.

There are prophets here who will have peace, others battles, and a third set who refer us to the year 1763 for the end of our warfare. Some of them must prophesy rightly; and accordingly they will become miraculous. Such seers resemble the almanac makers, or astrologers, who write the words, rain, sunshine, wind, fair

weather, heat, and cold, to gratify the superstition of the people. I know not whether your countrymen will make peace or continue the war. I am the doubtful doctor; I know nothing, except that it is my wish again to find myself in your company, in my little retreat, far from crimes, cabals, the heroic follies of lunatics, and the tumults of a too much agitated life; such as are found in my place, and in the crowd of courts.

Adieu, my dear marquis; do not forget those who fight for you, and remain persuaded of my perfect friendship.

L E T T E R CX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Potsdam, June 20, 1761.

I RETURN your majesty infinite thanks for your goodness in permitting me to take the waters for a fortnight at Sans-Souci: yet how could you imagine this place would make me think of you more than another? Wherever I am, you, sire, are continually present to my thoughts; and your benefits, which follow me to all places, and my own gratitude, which is equal

to

to those benefits, incessantly make me remember how much I owe you.

I suppose I shall be at Berlin on the 1st of July, and that I shall there daily hear some good news. I have no doubt but that fortune will finally declare in your favour. Your knowledge and your fortitude will make her determine to aid the good cause.

I hear, sire, with inexpressible joy, of the conclusion and signing of your treaty with the good and brave Mussulmen; and, if those worthy children of the great prophet will but act seriously, I can conceive no doubt of your superiority over your enemies; especially should peace be concluded between the French and the English. The latter apparently will not belye themselves, for the first time, and make a shameful peace, and injurious to their allies; for the English of the two last wars are not those of the reign of queen Anne; and they appear to pique themselves, within these twenty years, on repairing the blame incurred by their hasty secession before the battle of Denain.

With respect to the Turks, sire, I must own to your majesty, I cannot reconcile what you have told me of your treaty, and of the continuation of the war; for either they will act or they will not. If they act, how great will be your supe-

riority ! And, if they do not act, I do not perceive the advantages of your treaty, for the time present ; yet the time present is the grand article.

In fine, while my feeble fight is not able to penetrate this obscure cloud of politics, I am incessantly praying that I may again see you tranquil, happy, and in the enjoyment of a permanent and honourable peace. Oh that you could rid yourself of all these cares, and here calmly come to live in the bosom of the arts and belles lettres at Sans-Souci ! This charming abode daily becomes more pleasant and more magnificent. I twice a day go to admire the most beautiful morsel of architecture existing, except St. Peter's at Rome. The eye continually meets new pleasure, while it contemplates this superb edifice.

The colonnade, likewise, is almost finished ; and would have surprised the ancient Romans, had it been placed in the gardens of Augustus. May peace, fire, soon procure you the pleasure of beholding all these beauties.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CXI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

July 2, 1761.

I HAVE finished reading your Gassendi, and to you I hold myself indebted for the impression he has made upon me. The physical part of his work, as it relates to the formation of bodies, the units of which matter is composed, and as far as it explains the system of Epicurus, I think exceedingly good. I own many difficulties may be raised concerning his angular, round, and pointed atoms: however it cannot be doubted but that, if there be primordial bodies, they must differ in kind and species, that their various composition or arrangement may give birth to the four elements, and to the infinite productions of nature. These elements of matter likewise must be impenetrable, hard, and secure from destruction. Epicurus and Gassendi have maintained this, who certainly have discovered some truths, notwithstanding the impenetrable veil by which they are hidden from our curiosity.

I find very instructive parts in his treatise on men, plants, animals, and stones; and on the generation

generation and corruption of animated beings, Epicurus and he have been obliged to admit a vacuum, that motion might be possible. He likewise speaks of attraction, and of light, as if he had divined the truths which the astonishing calculations of Newton have demonstrated.

I confess I am not so well satisfied with his astronomy as with the rest. Though he does not explain himself, he seems to incline to the Ptolemean system; and dares not admit that of Copernicus, unless by dispensation from the Pope. His morality is no doubt the weakest part of his work; I find nothing good in it, except that which regards the prudence of those who govern kingdoms: the remainder smells too much of his rector, who divides, subdivides, and defines words, many of which he employs to say very little.

The article on freedom is the weakest of all. In his seventh volume he appears to have been in haste to finish his work; perhaps Bernier, his translator and abbreviator, has not done him justice. To you, therefore, who can repair to the fountain head, I apply, that you may inform me whether these errors appertain to the philosopher or the traveller.

Thus, my dear marquis, have I finished a long book, to do which I was in haste, left
Laudohn,

Laudohn, who assuredly is no philosopher, should rudely have interrupted my studies. I have at present chosen such books as I could quit without regret.

A propos of books—I am told that Voltaire has written a second volume to his *Candide*. Let me desire you to order little Beaufobre to send it me.

I this day received some melons from Sans-Souci, and when I saw them exclaimed—“ Oh too fortunate melons ! You have enjoyed a fight of the marquis, which to me is forbidden. How drinks he the waters ? Do they agree with him ? Is he cheerful ? Does he walk ? Does he take exercise ? ”—To all this would you believe it the melon answered not a word ; and to punish his silence I ate him to your health. When the months of July, August, September, and October shall be passed, I hope to write to you not on speculative but on practical philosophy.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; cork up the crevices in your body well, that they may endure as long as the atoms of Gassendi, and may be secure from malady, infirmity, and those disorders which menace our frail machine. Philosophize in tranquillity, * * * * *
* * * * *
and remain persuaded of my friendship.

In

In despite of his style and his Latin, Gassendi, the great scrutinizer of nature, remains doubtful between monsieur Moses and master Epicurus. A lame system, destitute of truth and science, is no system for me. Though, with a firm and vigorous step, he takes proof as his guide, he soon begins to reel; and in his fear and excessive prudence foolishly supports himself on the crutches of error.

L E T T E R CXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, July 4, 1761.

AT length Pondicherry, that had been attacked and blocked up for more than two years, is taken; and the news was received at Paris at the same time when that of the victory of prince Ferdinand arrived. It is affirmed the English fleet has sailed on a new expedition. Should all this not accelerate the negotiations of M. de Buffi at London, we must conclude that every rule of prudence and good sense has been totally forsaken by the French ministry. Let theologians afterward invent tales, of the care which providence takes to place enlightened men at the head of kingdoms.

When I examine the conduct of the French I continually have a wish to write a work, intituled, —The Contempt of the Creator for the Creature. How great must be the affliction of Paris, where so many people are totally ruined by the loss of Pondicherry ! And this is the result of the caprice of certain individuals, who were persuaded they had discovered the finest and most sublime of political systems. What would Louis XIV. say, should he rise from the dead, and behold France much more loaded with taxes than it was during the last years of the unfortunate war of the Spanish succession ; and were he told that the West and East Indies have both been lost ; that the French colonies on the coast of Africa are in the possession of the English ; that more than a hundred and fifty thousand men have perished in Germany, either by disease or the sword ; and that all this has happened in consequence of an endeavour to increase the power of the house of Austria ? However great might be the astonishment of the monarch, it would still be much augmented, when he should hear that all these things have been occasioned by the counsels of a little hussley of the rue (or street) St. Denis ; and under the direction of a bad poet, who was educated in the seminary of St. Sulpice.

The

The news which your majesty has done me the favour to send me, have given me infinite pleasure. I perceive you enjoy perfect health; and with respect to the consequences of the war, I will never disturb my quiet, when I shall know you are able to act at the head of your armies. I am well persuaded your enemies will finally be obliged to grant you a good and honourable peace; and that all their vain efforts will only have concurred to impart a new splendour to your glory, and to immortalize your constancy and fortitude.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

The camp of Pultzen,
July 9, 1761.

YOUR letter would furnish me with materials for a large philosophic commentary. I find it is necessary to examine the extent of human reason, the clouds by which it is obscured, and the illusions which lead it into error. I could cite numerous examples, which history affords, of the false reasoning, and the bad logic,

of those who govern kingdoms ; and we should find, after attentive examination, that the different manner of considering objects, and the passions, prejudices, and sometimes an excess of artifice, pervert the natural good sense which seems to be the inheritance of all men ; inasmuch that some reject with contempt what others desire with ardour. You need but to extend these reflections, and apply them to what you have written to me, in order to divine all I could say on the subject.

I am vexed that you have not peaceably continued to take the waters of Sans-Souci. Though your inquietude be a mark of the part you take in my situation, I fear lest it should be injurious to yourself ; and it cannot in the least affect the consequences of the events of the campaign, which doctor Pangloss would tell you were necessary in this best of possible worlds. We approach the moment when the dénouement will begin to manifest itself, and all will be in action. Recollect those lines from the philosophical poet Lucretius :

Sed nil dulcius est, &c..*

- * But, above all, 'tis pleasantest to get
The top of high philosophy, and sit
On the calm, peaceful, flourishing head of it. CREECH.

YOU

You know what follows. Between this and the month of November there are now a hundred and ten days: these must be passed with fortitude and heroic indifference. Read once more Epicetetus, and the Reflections of Marcus Antoninus. These are tonics for the relaxed fibres of the soul.

I have taken every measure which I thought necessary for my own defence. Kaunitz is preparing to make redoubled attacks; and I fearlessly behold his preparations, well determined to perish or to save my country. Though not of accident, we may be masters of our mind; and not dishonour the dignity of our species by a cowardly attachment to this world, which, love it as much as we will, we must one day leave. You will think me something of the stoic, marquis; but we are obliged to keep arms of every temperature in our arsenal, to be employed as occasion shall require. Were I with you at Sans-Souci, I should yield to the pleasures of your conversation; my philosophy would be then more gentle, and my reflections less gloomy. The pilot and his sailors must be active in a storm; they may laugh and take rest when they are safe in harbour.

I have

I have written what I thought of the works of your countryman Gassendi, in which I find many things superior to his age. I only condemn his project of leaguering Jesus Christ with Epicurus. Gassendi was a theologian, and this was the consequence of the prejudice of education; or it was the fear of the Inquisition, which first made him imagine so whimsical a partnership. We even see he has not the courage to justify the great Galileo.

Bayle has extended all the arguments which Gassendi had imagined: and to me it seems that the former is much the best reasoner, from his dexterity in handling his subject; and the perspicuity of mind with which he has developed the most distant consequences of those principles more copiously than any preceding philosopher had done. I have never seen the work of Gassendi, which you have mentioned, on Descartes; I have nothing written by this philosopher except what Bernier has translated. The refutation of the system of vortices, the plenum, ramified matter, and innate ideas, if I am not deceived, would afford him a fine field. May my enemies plans of campaign be as ridiculous as the system of Descartes; may I refute them as easily by solid arguments, not *in barbara*, but *de*

facto, as that system has been refuted. I again return to my sheep*, my dear marquis; and avow, notwithstanding all the fine reasoning of Gassendi, that Laudohn, O'Donnel, and those gentry who persecute me, have often occasioned such absence of mind in me as to prevent my being master of myself.

Do not forget me, my dear marquis; write to me whenever the passage shall be free, and remain persuaded of the friendship I have for you.
Adieu.

LETTER CXIV.

From the King.

The camp of Ottmachau,
July 25, 1761.

I THANK you, dear marquis, for the explanations you have sent me concerning the opinions of Gassendi. I well suspected that a mind so consistent could not be capable of certain prejudices, which I at first placed to the account of Bernier. It is pity that we have no faithful and complete translation of the works of this philosopher. Ignorant as I am, I am the

* Alluding to the character of the woollen-draper, in the French farce called *L'Avocat Patelin*. T.

greatest

greatest loser; you and your fellows read Latin, Greek, Hebrew, &c. while I only know a little French, and when that happens to fail me I am plunged in the vilest ignorance.

I place more dependance, however, on your philosophy than on your political prophecies. True it is that, judging from appearances, peace between France and England ought to be the consequence of the victory of prince Ferdinand; yet nothing is less certain; nor do I confide in such probabilities, till realized by time. You, no doubt, wish for news of what is passing here; and I can well imagine that an inhabitant of Berlin is curious to hear how we tilt in Silesia. I can satisfy you in a few words.

Laudohn came from the mountains on the 20th, and advanced toward Munsterberg. On the 21st I marched to Nimptsch; on the 22d to Munsterberg, in his teeth; and hither am I come to oppose his projected junction with the Russians. The latter are at Namslau. I have corps by which they are observed; and therefore, let them turn on what side they will, I hope to be too soon for them. The whole affair must be decided in a few days. You shall be informed of all, nor shall I fail to relate facts with the greatest truth. I would tell you more; but the courier, who is charged with important dis-

patches, is on the point of departure, which obliges me to end with the simple assurance of my friendship and esteem.

Adieu.

L E T T E R CXV.

From the King.

Strehlen, August 8, 1761:

HITHERTO, my dear marquis, we have done nothing but manœuvre; we have gained many trifling advantages, which I shall not mention, because they are unworthy your notice. The Russians, according to custom, pillage in Silesia, on the other side of the Oder. Laudohn is asleep at Wartha; nor are we doing much.

Let not your imagination run too fast: you are now ready to say—"Oh! No doubt, they are on the point of concluding an armistice."—Far from that, I assure you; for there is now less than ever any appearance of a suspension of arms between the belligerent powers, whether French and English, Prussians and Austrians, Swedes, Imperialists, &c. &c. This intelligence may
disconcert

disconcert your politics. The victory of prince Ferdinand, however, and the taking of Pondicherry and the Antilles, have not in the least cooled the warlike spirit of the court of Versailles.

Our campaign, according to appearances, will proceed slowly; and, as I suppose, will not become serious much sooner than autumn. Offer up your prayers to Fortune, that she may second our efforts. The sword, and not the pen, must lead to a general pacification. The want of money will effect that which reason and humanity ought to have performed. The battle will end for want of combatants. Time will tell; though I am almost tempted to believe we must make another campaign after the present.

I afford you ample subject for conjecture; more agreeable intelligence I would send were I able; but you must accept such as the current moment shall afford. Continue peaceably to work at your Plutarch, and be a little less indolent in writing to me.

Adieu, dear marquis.

[L E T T E R CXVI.]

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August 29, 1761.

I SEE, by the last letter which your majesty has done me the honour to write, that, notwithstanding the difficulties with which you are surrounded, you enjoy a good state of health. This, sire, I regard as the principal point; being convinced that, while you are able to act, the projects of the enemy will all evaporate in smoke. In numbers your foes have the superiority; but you are their master in intelligence, and the bravery of your troops: thus did Hannibal vanquish the Romans with much inferior forces.

Since the capture of Pondicherry, the finances of France have been in so pitiable a state, that the jettons * of the French academy have been suppressed. This has given birth to many short pleasant pieces, with which Paris was immediately overrun. In one of these the author says

* This term has occurred twice before; first in Vol. VI. Letter XCV. and again in Vol. IX. Letter CXXIII. In the first instance, it is properly rendered gaming counters; in the last, as well as the present, it means honorary medals, bestowed on academicians by the sovereign. Municipal medals are likewise called *jettons*. T.

the

the academy ought to depute two orators, to harangue the ambassadors of Russia and Sweden, and entreat them to restore that to the sons of Apollo, from the subsidies which France pays their monarchs, which constitutes the principal produce of their literary labours, and which is so useful to all those who wish to pay compliments. I cannot comprehend how so total a derangement in the finances can accord with the war-like system of the court of Versailles.

What is the English fleet doing? It ought already to be under sail. Permit me, sire, after the example of a great minister (D'Argenson the fool) here to insert an old proverb—Strike while the iron is hot. If there be any serious appearance of beginning negociation in England, nothing is capable of adding greater weight to the business than a second enterprize like that of Belleisle. The gazettes all tell us of the departure of the fleet on another secret expedition; yet we are now near the month of September; and it is still in port. I hope this secret expedition will not resemble that of last year, which was to have been undertaken about the same time, and which was kept so secret that nobody yet ever knew what it was.

Your majesty is better informed than I am of several little advantages which prince Ferdinand,

and the prince your nephew, daily obtain ; I shall therefore say nothing more of them.

M. Joyard, your maitre d'hotel, not knowing how to address your majesty, has applied to me, and has requested me to inform you that he has still some effects at Lyons, of which he wishes to gain possession, in addition to those which he inherits from Pesne, his father-in-law. Leave of absence for six months will be necessary to finish his affairs ; and as he will find favourable opportunities, at the Leipzig fair, to undertake his journey, he will be under infinite obligations to your majesty, should you deign to grant him your permission. Your majesty has known him almost eight-and-twenty years ; you are well convinced he is incapable of prolonging his absence, a day beyond the time which it shall be your pleasure to prescribe.

You, no doubt, sire, are informed that the Jesuits in France are forbidden to take scholars, and likewise to receive any novice ; and that this has produced much alarm. Thus the Greeks, in the decline of the Eastern Empire, disputed on theological questions, at the time that their enemies robbed them of Egypt and Armenia.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

Berlin, October 12, 1761.

I HAD the honour to write to your majesty, by favour of the governor of Glogau. I know not whether you have received my letter. I would have written again, but that I was first desirous to gain certain information concerning a report which I could not credit. When I knew it to be true, I repeated to myself what I wished to say for your consolation; which is that, however great your genius, you are not a god; and that, after having acted with all human prudence, you neither could prevent nor foresee things which appeared absolute impossibilities.

Such, sire, is what personally regards you, in the loss of Schweidnitz. But how might a garrison be forced in two hours, situated in a fortress which, if but moderately defended, ought to have sustained a siege of three weeks after the trenches had been opened? I condemn no person, because I depend only on public rumour, and on the report of several soldiers from the garrison of Schweidnitz, who
have

have found means to escape, and are come to Berlin. But when I think that, with two battalions of militia, we held out five days against more than thirty thousand men, and sustained two assaults; and when I afterward see Dresden taken, without firing a gun—twelve thousand men surrender themselves prisoners at Maxen; and general Wunsch, who had cut his way, obliged to return by order from his general—Schweidnitz carried in two hours, and Glatz in four—I do not find any thing extraordinary in the manner in which the English acted with admiral Byng.

I again repeat, I accuse no man; I am ignorant of the cause of these events; but this of Schweidnitz is so extraordinary, that it is impossible for your true servants not to feel the most afflicting grief. I am persuaded, sire, you will repair this vexatious accident without delay; but it is most mortifying that you should, every campaign, be occupied in repairing errors in the commission of which you had no part.

Affairs are in a good train in Pomerania; and the junction of general Platen with the duke of Wirtemberg has not cost thirty men, nor one baggage waggon, nor any loss of provisions. This Platen is what we may call a man.

The Austrians who were at Halle have fled head over heels at the approach of the brave general Seidlitz, who has twice this summer bastinadoed the army of the Empire.

I say nothing to your majesty of prince Henry, who, at the time that you were surrounded, conducted himself with the prudence of Turenne, and who has continually sent us advices to Berlin that we had nothing to fear.

The French have again presented themselves before Wolfenbuttle, which place they are bombarding. They have committed cruelties and exactions, in East-Friesland, a hundred times worse than those of the Cossacs. Prince Ferdinand has detached a corps to drive them from the country of Brunswic.

The English having recalled their minister from Paris, will apparently act with their fleet, which has tranquilly remained, during the whole campaign, in the ports of Yarmouth * and Plymouth.

It must be allowed, the French have laughed at England with their pretended negotiations, and have made them lose all the fruits they might have gathered during the campaign by the aid of their naval force. This conduct

* The marquis means to say Portsmouth and Plymouth. T.

drives all the partisans of the good cause to despair.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

S I R E,

Berlin, October 23, 1761.

I IMAGINE your majesty must have received two letters, which I have had the honour to write to you since the beginning of this month; one by way of the governor of Glogau, and the other by the post. I hear no news from your majesty, and am much alarmed lest your health should be affected by fatigue and the present bad weather.

The French have been driven off and beaten before Brunswic, the siege of which they have raised, and have immediately abandoned Wolfenbuttle. Their flight has cost them about twelve hundred men, killed and taken; but this is what you must long since have known.

The Russians are marching in Poland, on the side of Dantzic. They have made a woful figure this year, and you have charmingly described them in the two delightful pieces which
you

you have sent me. They were reduced to so much distress lately, near Colberg, that their coffers came to beg bread, for God's sake, at our advanced posts.

M. de Verelt, who has had the misfortune to lose his only son, has demanded permission from the States General to go to Holland for some months. He has requested me to inform your majesty that he will pass through Magdeburg, that he may, on his road, receive the orders which you shall be pleased to entrust him with, from count Finck. He would already have been three weeks departed; but the use which he might be of at Berlin, should any accident have happened, made him determine to defer his journey; and he will continue here till about the time of going into winter quarters. When I speak of this minister to your majesty, I cannot speak good enough; he is one of the worthiest men in the world, and every moment becomes more dear and more respectable to the citizens of Berlin.

I wish I could at present see you more tranquil; but I well perceive the campaign is not yet ended in Silesia, and that nothing but the rigour of winter can occasion the departure of the armies. I return, sire, to the burthen of my song; preserve your health, and all at last
will

will be well, in despite of the bitterness and fury of your foes. I repeat what I had the honour to write in my last letter : you are not a god, and nothing less could have prevented the accident of Schweidnitz ; add to which, your campaign is admirable ; the Russian army is as much ruined as if it had lost a grand battle. The rest will be repaired, and of this your genius is my pledge.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

ALECTO descends to Amata, and infuses her poison into her heart : she awakes enraged against Eneas.

You see it is not sufficient to fight, and that it is more difficult to subdue malignant women than courageous men. I am as desirous of peace as my enemies are averse to it ; and though we exert ourselves, this must be attributed to necessity.

You may continue to amuse yourself this year by reading the gazettes, not with news of
what

what is passing in the Apalachian mountains, or the quarrels of the Morlachians; but on what is to decide the freedom or the slavery of Europe, which a new triumvirate endeavours to enchain. Were the choice my own, I would rather sit a spectator than be one of the actors on the stage; but, since the die is cast, we must run the venture.

Happy the man in wisdom's temple seated, &c.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, November 3, 1761.

I AM far from thinking that individual accidents have not a prodigious influence over general affairs; but, from the beginning of the present war, I have adopted a maxim from the Telemachus of Fenelon, on which I have founded my principles—"Previous to the arrival of misfortunes," says Mentor, "every effort should be made by which they may be prevented; but, when they come, we have no other resource than that of contemning them."

What

What has strengthened me in this opinion is, that I have continually seen our worst accidents succeeded by the most lucky events. While you shall be able to act, I shall always have good hopes ; and had you but ten men, and your health, I should not despair but that at length I should see you confound the projects of your foes.

We have been in the utmost surprize, at Berlin, to hear of the adventure of the Austrian officers, prisoners at Magdeburg, whose conspiracies have been discovered. These proceedings are fearful. How can officers, who have pledged their honour, thus forfeit it so unworthily ? If all which the letters that come from Magdeburg contain be true, very serious reflections ought to be made on the police, and the guard which should be fixed in that city. The army of the prince de Soubise is at length gone into winter quarters. He has sent back to France fifty-five squadrons and twenty-two battalions. The French are arming in all their ports to act against England ; and there is talk once more of building flat-bottomed boats, which would have appeared to me flatter* than

* It happens that the English will admit of the same play on words which is in the original, which I therefore think it my duty to preserve. T.

the boats themselves, had but Mr. Pitt continued in office.

In the mean time the English are proceeding entirely to demolish Belleisle, that they may employ the strong garrison which they are obliged to keep there. Such is the intelligence affirmed in all the English papers.

I know not what Voltaire is doing; he has published a letter to prove himself an excellent christian, and that he punctually attends mass. That man will die as he has lived, agitated by a thousand chimerical projects. His last work on Russia has entirely failed.

Speaking of works, let me say, I have, for more than two months, discontinued my translation of Plutarch, which I shall soon take up again; and I have employed this time in translating the most ancient Greek philosopher that is known to us, called Ocellus Lucanus. He has written a work on the necessity of the eternity of the world. He lived long before Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, &c. His work is short but excellent; and, under the pretext of commenting on my author, I have added various dissertations, at which the enemies of philosophy will not laugh. I was induced to write this work, which I shall have the honour to send your majesty printed in about a week, by the

ill-humour into which I have been lately thrown by several fanatics. Not a month has passed, this year, in which I have not seen some libel against philosophers. Among others, there is one entitled the *Anti-Sans-Souci*; a large volume, worthy of the pen of a hackney-coachman. I wish your military enemies were as contemptible as your literary opponents. Their great war-horse is the work of La Mettrie: far from endeavouring to support it, when I came to that article, I thought proper to prove, that La Mettrie never spoke or thought like a philosopher; but that, in various things, he fell into the same mistakes as divines; and, which is the pleasant part of the story, I have proved this assertion past dispute.

I have endeavoured to write with all possible decency; and I hope every man, who is neither fool nor fanatic, must allow that the sentiments of Epicurus may be followed, and yet his disciple may be a very worthy and a very useful man in society.

I beg your majesty's indulgence by anticipation, and entreat you to excuse the faults you may find in my work, remembering the zeal which induced me to defend the good cause.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, November 12, 1761.

I TAKE the liberty to send your majesty the book which I had the honour to mention in my last letter. May the Greek and Latin which your majesty will there meet with inspire you with no disgust ! I must inform you they ought not to embarrass persons who do not understand these languages. The passages cited are all faithfully translated, and the sense is continually connected, independent of the Greek and Latin quotations. The work may be read in French, without interruption, and with the same facility as if neither Greek nor Latin were there.

I have endeavoured to prove, indubitably to prove, in this work, that the morality of the true Epicurean philosophers is infinitely superior to that of divines ; that all the pretended philosophic reasons by which they endeavour to explain the divine Being, and the nature of the soul, are but bubbles of wind. I have admitted the truths of religion because they were revealed ; but I will give a good account of

this revelation in my translation of Timæus the Locrian, and will bring it to the light of day. But while destroying the arguments of theologians, that the fanatic and foolish may not cry aloud, it is necessary not to touch their reed-like staff of revelation, which I have even turned to my own advantage, and to the destruction of the philosophic objections of the devout.

I have already informed your majesty what was my reason for undertaking the work. I saw the libels which the Jansenists disperse with so much ardour against philosophers with indignation, and especially against what they call the Prussian society. The awkward and ridiculous work entitled *Anti-Sans-Souci* completed my dissatisfaction; and I wished effectually to unmask the posse of hypocrites and mercenary scribes who deserve to be held in disgrace by all worthy men.

I was obliged to give up La Mettrie. He was one of the forlorn hope whom it was necessary to sacrifice in the battle, a convenient victim; but I have well sprinkled his tomb with the blood of theologians; and I hope that, in future, it will not be said, in imitation of *Les Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* *, that the mode of

* Ecclesiastical intelligence.

thinking of the philosopher of Sans-Souci, and of the men of letters who surround him, may be estimated by the works of the physician La Mettrie.

I dare not flatter myself my performance merit your majesty's esteem; I am too well acquainted with your knowledge, and the inefficacy of my own talents; but I hope, in return for my zeal for the good cause, you will be indulgent, and will pardon the defects with which you will but too frequently meet in my book. The most fortunate thing that can happen to me is that you should judge me, sire, not according to my work, but according to the pleasure I took in writing my work.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. Let me request your majesty to read the preliminary discourse, that you may form an idea of Ocellus Lucanus, and his philosophy.

L E T T E R CXXII,

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, November 24, 1761.

I HAVE read your verses with admiration, and you sent them me at a time when nothing less than the pleasure they inspired was necessary, to relieve the dejection into which I had been thrown by a wretched colic, which scarcely left me the power of thought; but I take patience, and, when I am in pain, or in languor, I repeat these lines:

*Quoi! vous ne voyez pas qu'ici-bas la souffrance,
Sans connaître de rang, de roture ou naissance,
Atteint un criminel, ainsi qu'un innocent?
Chacun s'y voit sujet, & nul n'en est exempt*.*

According to my taste, and weak judgment, I can assure your majesty I have not seen any of your works which possess greater force or more correctness than this last. I have determined to learn it by rote; for it will afford me true aid under every accident of life.

* What! see you not that, in this sublunary world, pain, regardless of rank and birth, equally attacks the guilty and the innocent? To this all are subject, from it none are exempt.

I am

I am well persuaded, like your majesty, that all our ancient Greek philosophers understood physics very ill; but wishing to give, in the dissertations which I have added to my translation, an idea of the different opinions of philosophers, by shewing the weakness of the ancients I awaken the penetration of the moderns. Ocellus had little reason to believe the transmutation of the elements; but, among the ancient philosophers, the Epicureans denied this pretended transmutation, the impossibility of which Boerhaave has in our times proved by the most curious chemical experiments. This is the subject of a note in which I examine the opinion of Ocellus, with whom I seldom agree in sentiments.

Your majesty will perceive I have, in a dissertation on the eternity of the earth, precisely said that which it were to be wished Ocellus had said. If your majesty will do me the favour to read my dissertations, you will see I have not made the sauce for the fish, but that I have boiled the fish that I might have the opportunity to make the sauce. Forgive me, sire, this poor proverb, because it well explains my intention in translating Ocellus.

The weather makes me tremble for your majesty's health. Your last letter somewhat quieted my

alarms; for it was rumoured, at Berlin, that you had the gout. I hope you take such precautions as will preserve you from it all winter.

I have seen the presents which you send to the Ottoman Porte; nothing can be more splendid, more superb, and at the same time better imagined: should they produce a good effect, I shall not regret the sums they may have cost, which certainly are more considerable than those set apart for this purpose by France in a hundred years.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, December 8, 1761.

THE tale which you have done me the honour to send is well written, and well versified; but there is only one string wanting to the violin, and the able musician to whom it belongs still can play perfectly on it, and not suffer the others to be cut; of this I am well assured, and that it was not his fault that the first has been cut.

Your alterations in the Stoic are rather different

ferent readings than corrections, for there are some of the former verses which please me full as much as the other : in fine they are both excellent.

I have met with two passages in which the alterations did not seem to me correct.

J'ai vu George et Auguste, et le Czar, prince atroce *.

There is a kind of hiatus in *George et Auguste*. *George et* is well, but not *et Auguste*. The *t* is never pronounced in the word *et*, which is the cause of the hiatus. This is one of the errors condemned by Boileau :

Gardez qu'une voyelle à courir trop hâtée

Ne soit dans son chemin d'une voyelle heurtée †.

In fine, sire, you are king in Jerusalem ; it is not for a petty scribe like me to condemn the high priest of the temple, to whom the mysteries of the sanctuary are all known ; though it seems to me that this line ought to be corrected.

The following is another passage to which I object ; not to its poetry, but to the grammatical construction.

* I have seen George, Augustus, and the Czar, atrocious prince.

† Beware lest your too hasty vowel should stumble on a fellow vowel.

Qui !

*Quoi ! ne voyez vous point qu'ici-bas la fortune
Respecte ni vertu, ni pouvoir, ni naissance * ?*

We must absolutely say, *ne respecte ni vertu*, &c. The omission of the *ne* is too great a licence.

This, fire, is all that the most rigid criticism can enable me to discover in your Stoic, which, in my weak judgment, is the best thing you have ever written, among your numerous other excellent productions.

An affair has happened here, the recital of which may perhaps amuse your majesty. Porporini has been accused by a girl of being the father of her child, and condemned in law to pay the girl a hundred crowns, and to keep the child to whom he is declared the father. Far from appealing against his sentence, Porporini immediately paid the hundred crowns, and acknowledged himself the father of the child, which he has taken home to educate, and has sent to thank his judges for having been so good as to repair the injury which had been done him by the surgeons of Venice. The whole city has laughed at the adventure. I have not yet seen Porporini, but I have requested him to give me a call to-day. It is said he is in full joy of heart at

* What ! do you not see that, in this world, fortune pays no respect to virtue, power, or birth ?

having been announced to the whole earth the father of a child.

I have entreated the governor to send a letter in cypher to your majesty, which has been written to me by a man of the best intentions. I should immediately have sent the original of that letter, but it appears to me that the post is no very safe conveyance, and I have rather chosen to trust to the governor. Should your majesty think you have no need of the offer made you by the author of the letter, you will still perceive there are people who have a real affection for you; and that this person is, in this respect, worthy of praise.

Though I am well convinced your majesty does not want the offer of this man, I imagine you will do well to return him your gracious thanks by the governor; for who can say what may happen hereafter? And the person of whom I speak to your majesty has conducted himself, on one or two very delicate occasions this summer, with the approbation, and to the great satisfaction, of all good citizens, and especially of some who are most useful to the state.

Your majesty loves truth, nor will you take it amiss that people whom you know are devoted to you, body and soul, should speak sincerely. I therefore am convinced your majesty
will

will not disapprove the liberty I take of frankly speaking my thoughts on this subject.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, December 29, 1761.

TEN days since I had the honour to write to your majesty, which honour I believed I never more should have enjoyed. I have had an inflammation brought on by my cursed spasms, and for three days I was thought past hope. At length, after having been four times bled, and taken a course of bark to avoid a gangrene, with a slight medicine when the disease was partly subsided, I am, for this time, out of danger.

The dreadful act of Warkotsch and the catholic priest I regarded as a tale; but when I saw the citation of these two wretches inserted in the gazettes; when I heard they had both been taken, and suffered to escape, I exclaimed, Oh Frederic! what servants have you, while you so well serve your subjects and your country!

Go tszkowsky has been with me to speak of his
affair.

affair. He is much afflicted because his credit appears to have been greatly injured by the accident which has befallen him. He entreated me to write to you on the subject, but I was seized with my illness about this time. It appears, from the reasons which he has stated to me, that he is innocent, and that he really acted with good faith. He shewed me that he should be obliged to give up a part of his stock in trade, because of the perplexed situation of his affairs at present, but I bad him beware how he did so, till he should receive an answer from your majesty; till which time he promised he would proceed no farther.

The English, by their manœuvres, have found the secret, having three hundred and sixty ships of war, to suffer eight wretched ships and six frigates to leave the port of Brest, and thus prevent them from taking Martinico. Some fiend let loose from hell must have interfered in all these accidents. Had I died ten days ago, my only grief would have been never to have seen you more; and my consolation that I was about to quit a world so abominable and so mad. I would say more but am prevented by my present weakness.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, December^o 30, 1761.

WEAKNESS prevented me yesterday, when I had the honour to write to your majesty, from mentioning many things of which I imagine you are not well informed. The affliction with which I see how you are served renders life a burthen to me. You, sire, know my zeal; judge then how bitter were the feelings of my heart, when I was convinced, and saw with my own eyes the various follies which have occasioned the loss of Colberg, and the half of Pomerania; and that these follies have originated in quarrels, or the bad manœuvres of people in whom we here had placed all our hopes. Had your majesty but sent one of your boots into Pomerania, or had your brother, prince Henry, sent one of his to take the command, Colberg would still have been ours. One goes to the aid of the other, and brings with him twelve thousand men without provisions, which might easily have been collected, before the arrival of Butturlin in Pomerania: the consequence was that, the day after his arrival at Colberg, he is obliged to depart with his corps, in search of food; on his
road

road he suffers the corps under Knobloch to be cut off; and thus occasions the imprisonment of this general.

The other, who remained before Colberg, does worse still. He abandons, but does not destroy his entrenchments, lest he should render it difficult for Romanzow to station himself there; he leaves Russian prisoners in Colberg, lest the provisions should not be soon enough consumed; he loses two thousand men in useless attacks; and, in fine, to crown his work, he suffers three squadrons and the regimental drums to be taken at Stargard.

I do but repeat to your majesty what all the officers and soldiers of the corps who are here proclaim aloud. Notwithstanding the enormous fatigues which these men have suffered, they all are full of good will; it is not courage or zeal for your majesty's service which they want. How much reason, sire, had you several times to observe that we have no need of arms but of heads! Never was unfortunate prediction more true.

All this, however, sire, may yet be repaired; the grand article is your majesty's health: you are now about to take some short repose. I have been told you have had a bad cold in your head: considering the prodigious fatigues you have undergone,

undergone, how could it be otherwise? I hope warmth and tranquillity will rid you of the disorder. For the love of God send me news of your health.

With respect to myself, I am on the recovery, and, considering the grief of heart I feel, I am but too well.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, January 19, 1762.

I HAVE this very moment received the two pieces which your majesty has done me the favour to send, and which are perfectly well written. I instantly read them twice successively; and I have met with two verses which indeed are not defective, but one of which seems to me feeble; and the other contains a word which a Roman never could have used, because it was not invented till the first age of Christianity.

The first of these lines is in Otho, and the second in Cato.

*Au moins à cette fois je puis vous être utile *.*

* For once at least I may be useful.

Au

Au moins à cette fois appears to me proper, beside that it would be more correct to say, *Au moins cette fois je puis vous être utile*; but the verse would then be defective. This may easily be altered.

The second line is very beautiful—

Oui, glorieux martyr de Rome et de ses loix *—

Except that the word *martyr* was unknown to Cato, and took birth under the persecutions which were suffered by the Christians. It may at present be employed with propriety, because it is in common use. Thus we say, he is the martyr of the unfeeling heart of such a one; he is the martyr of his own obstinacy, &c. But, in the mouth of Cato, the word does not seem to me well placed; especially when Cato himself speaks, and is speaking to other Romans. Such, fire, is all that the most severe criticism could furnish, against two most excellent and well versified pieces.

I come to what your majesty did me the favour to mention, relative to my predictions of Leipzig, which have been well verified; for you have made one of the finest campaigns that ever was beheld; but neither I nor any man on earth could certainly have foreseen that a governor would have suffered a fortress, defended

* Yes, glorious martyr of Rome and of her laws.

by three thousand men, to be taken in an hour. Be it supposed that he had been formally attacked, and, having eight thousand men, had lost five in the defence of his out-works; would he not have deserved punishment if, with the remaining three thousand, he should have surrendered the town before a breach had been made in the body of the fortress? And why did he not defend this last retreat, if he were too weak to guard the out-works? It is an inconceivable act that a man should suffer himself to be forced, when defended by a rampart flanked with bastions, and with a good moat in front of this same rampart. Certainly, sire, this is what I did not foresee, nor ever could have foreseen.

Your majesty speaks of the foreign commissioner's office of Pomerania; as you must be a hundred times better informed than I am, I have nothing to say; but this office was not lately at Malchen in Mecklenburg. Had I less zeal for your majesty I should be less afflicted at all this; but my grief is extreme when I perceive the cares you take, the fatigues you undergo, and the good and glorious things you effect, are all rendered useless, either by the blunders or the want of experience of others.

Amid my griefs, I have had one consolation, which is to know that you are in good health.

Fear

Fear of the enemy I have none; and I still remain in a perfect conviction that, after so many vexatious events, some fortunate blow must finally arrive, by which affairs will all be restored to a good situation.

War is declared between the Spaniards and English, at which I rejoice, and think I have very good reason so to do. The English have no longer any separate peace to make; and God knows what at length they might have been induced to conclude, tempted by the concessions that were offered them by France. With two hundred ships, they have remained with their arms folded all the last campaign, and have suffered themselves to be duped and amused by the ministry of Versailles, who were endeavouring to conclude a treaty with the Spaniards. I imagine they now think very differently; and it is certain that you at present are as necessary, at least, to them as they are to you, for a hundred thousand reasons, with which your majesty is a hundred thousand times better acquainted than I am.

I have no doubt of the solitary life your majesty leads; but, if you resemble a Carthusian, I certainly may well say I am one of the fathers of La Trappe. It is now, literally, eight months since I last left my apartment. I am

fortunately well lodged; and I smother my chagrin by reading the English papers, which I cause to be translated to me, and Greek books, which I study in order to understand them.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, January 22, 1762.

YOUR last letter increased my alarms; and the vexations with which, as I may say, I see you overwhelmed, led me to fear lest your health should finally be utterly injured; but the news which you no doubt received, a few hours after you had written the letter which you did me the honour to send, must have convinced you that Fortune will, in the end, be less rigorous, and will dispense as much glory to you as she formerly did. In fine, behold one who is gone to the shades below, thence never to return, to throw oil into the flames of discord. The news has surpris'd us all, and the more so, because it came unexpected. It was a report that had so often been falsely spread that, when it was first heard, we believed it to be fabulous.

General Seidlitz has taken two thousand prisoners in the last action between him and the army of the Empire. These are better than so many Austrian prisoners; for they are rather recruits than prisoners.

It is long since I suspected the horrid perfidy of which your majesty speaks; but, since the ills they wish to bring upon us have not taken place, we ought not to afflict ourselves at them, except so far as they are in future to be feared; and I perceive affairs in a situation under which it will be impossible for the ill will of certain people to be effectual, at least for the present.

I have made a large cross in my almanac opposite to the day which your majesty has done me the favour to announce, and which I did not think was so near. Often have I had the honour to repeat to your majesty, all will at last be well, provided you do but enjoy good health, and be but able to act.

Your majesty no doubt knows that the French were on the 6th of December to give up Port Mahon to the Spaniards. Should they at present be in the humour to make peace, what have they now to give in exchange to the English? I see no means by which they may come to an accommodation, or improve their present condition, increased as their losses have been by war.

It has been discovered that the Danish envoy was acquainted with the death of the empress of Russia three days sooner than it was brought hither by the couriers, the first of whom did not arrive before Tuesday morning; for on Sunday the envoy said to some persons — “ One of “ the principal crowned heads of Europe is “ dead.”

In vain did they press him to be more explicit; he would add nothing.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXVIII.

From the King.

Undated.

TRUE it is, my dear marquis, that favourable and unfavourable accidents succeed each other alternately. We have endured so many cruel and fearful misfortunes that some reverse might well be expected, which should afford us ease.

We still have to enquire however what is the extent of our hopes. I have been so unfortunate during this whole war, both with the pen and the sword, that it has inspired great diffidence
on

on every occasion; inſomuch that I no longer confide in any thing but my eyes and ears. I could write a long chapter on the different manners in which politicians loſe themſelves in their conjectures, nor would examples in point be wanting; and all becauſe they have ſuffered themſelves to be hurried away by their imagination, and thus to be precipitate in their judgments. This is what renders me tardy and circumſpect. Oh how excellent is experience! I, who was as thoughtleſs in my youth as a playful colt in a meadow, am now become as ſlow as old Neſtor; but I muſt add I am grey-headed, gnawed upon by grief, overwhelmed with infirmities, and, in a word, good for nothing but to be thrown to the dogs.

Your intelligence concerning Port Mahon is falſe, my dear marquis, as is that of your two thouſand priſoners and general Seidlitz. I do not wonder at theſe city rumours; we have them here. When we examine their origin, they are loſt in obſcurity, like the genealogies of great families. This is the moment for the inventors of tales, and the fabricators of reports. Nothing is incredible in which giants and fairies act no part; and few individuals are able to unveil truth, diſguiſed as ſhe is in her paſſage through ſo many mouths. You have always exhorted me

to take care of myself; but how may this be done, my dear marquis, jostled as I am? Birds which are given to be the play-things of children, and tops whipped by boys, are not more tormented and ill-treated than I have hitherto been, by my most bitter enemies.

Adieu, dear marquis. As soon as I shall have any alleviating, consolatory, and restorative intelligence to communicate, I shall not fail to relate it at length; but should the contrary happen, I shall be equally sincere. May the expected good quickly arrive.

Once more adieu; do not forget me.

L E T T E R CXXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

I AM neither dead nor buried, my dear marquis. My fever has left me, and I am at present as well as others. Your imagination depicts the future with a flattering pencil; but mine, less vivid and less cheerful, supposes nothing but difficulties, pains, dangers, and misfortunes, by which we are threatened.

I have indeed received news from the east,
but

but the affair is not concluded. They feed me with hope; I want something more substantial. However, toward the 10th, a courier ought to arrive which will bring us Moses and the prophets.

All goes well in Russia. I cannot have positive intelligence sooner than the 16th or the 18th of this month. Let us wait therefore, my dear marquis; patience, patience; for the world is to me the school of patience, in which my ardour is all damped. I am good for nothing but to vegetate. The oil of my lamp is exhausted before the wick: I should at best be only fit to turn Carthusian. This considered, what employment will you give me, should peace ever be made? Must I grind colours for the marchioness, or copy music for your viol di gamba? In fine, calm your fears, my dear marquis; do not let my health disturb you; and send me all the news you hear, especially literary news.

Adieu; I embrace you.

LET.

L E T T E R CXXX.

From the King.

Undated.

I KEEP my word with you, my dear marquis, and communicate the good intelligence to you, piping hot, as I have received it. Our friend the Khan is on the march for Yassy, at the head of a hundred thousand Tartars. He has sent me a succour of twenty-six thousand men, and the Turks are repairing full speed to Adrianople. I have been fortunate enough to reconcile their interests with those of the Russians; and to arm these two powers against the house of Austria. This was no easy work; and it was necessary to conciliate, in the best manner we could, interests so opposite, that they might meet in their present point of union. This is doubling the stakes, similar to the trick which Kaunitz played me. If providence will but consent, I may do my enemies all the mischief they wished to have done to me.

Do not therefore be astonished at my inaction; but be certain that, as soon as I shall have wound up my machine, I shall effect more in
a month

a month than I could in a year of any of the preceding campaigns.

This is a grand event; and must leave to posterity, at least for half a century, vestiges of this obstinate and cruel war. Rejoice, my dear marquis; henceforth we shall have none but good news to send. July and August will be the months of our greatest progress; every step we take will lead to peace, to the felicity of our poor nation. I begin to flatter myself I shall find balm to pour into our wounds, or an unguent for our burn, as you please.

Adieu, my dear marquis; we have not often an opportunity of sending news of such importance; and I send it you with pleasure, persuaded as I am of the part you take in what relates to me, and the prosperity of the country I govern. I embrace you, and seriously flatter myself I shall again meet you at Sans-Souci.

Adieu.

L E T T E R CXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 2, 1762.

YOU may well imagine the joy I felt at reading your letter ; this is the happiest day of my life. I have ever been persuaded that, in the end, all the projects of your enemies would vanish in smoke ; but my fears were left, before such decisive event, you should sink under the fatigues which you have for six years supported. In fine, after a fearful hurricane, calm is come again ; and I know too well the extent of your understanding not to be certain that you will profit as much as you can by the fortunate turn which affairs have taken.

You ought, in pity to me, to send me more good news. I have, without exaggeration, read your letter thirty times within six hours, and I shall read it as many more times. But you seem to have only mentioned one half of the fortunate things which have happened. You have treated me like a sick man, who is too weak yet to support the blaze of day. In reality, you have not acted unwisely relative to my poor brain ; for one degree of pleasure more, and I would not have

have been answerable for its sanity. Oh had I but the happiness now to be in your majesty's presence, how many things could I say ! So many ideas rush into my mind that I believe they would form a huge folio. I wish to commit some of them to paper, and send them you ; but I wait for another letter.

I have still need of elixir to perfectly recover my strength. I resemble those sick persons who, having long lingered between life and death, scarcely can persuade themselves they are in no danger of a relapse.

I therefore wait for a line or two from your majesty, that I may yield to that lively joy which inspires us, in these terrestrial abodes, with those ecstasies which the devout hope to taste in heaven. It depends therefore on your majesty to make me one of the blessed, and to render me a living saint ; a thing beyond the power of all the popes in the world.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, February 12, 1762:

I WAIT for the first letter of your majesty as the Jews wait for their Messiah; and, to own the truth, I am in great need of a little consolation. The building is crumbling away on all sides. I am continually incommoded since my last illness; and, if I do not prop up my poor body, it will soon fall to the ground; but, to render it effectual, a little gaiety is requisite. I hope the first letter I shall receive from your majesty will give me not a little.

The Austrians affect to spread a report, in most of the public papers, that you are inclined to make peace with them. I read, in one of the articles from Vienna, that they have sent a new ambassador to that place to which you sent what I saw six months since at Berlin. I imagine they spread these rumours only to induce certain people to believe you will not assist them, should they declare war, and that you have offered terms of accommodation to the court of Vienna; but I suspect every thing after what I have seen.

The directors of the academy have been with me, to commission me to entreat your majesty would permit one of their members, M. Sulzer, an excellent citizen, and a Swiss by birth, to make a journey of two or three months to his own country, there to regulate some domestic affairs. Next to M. Euler, this M. Sulzer is the best of our academicians. He is a very learned man, and a good mathematician; add to which, he does not receive any pension from the academy. He has, notwithstanding, very prudently submitted to the regulation which you made in the academy, that, during the war, no academician should remove without permission from your majesty. Let me entreat you would be kind enough to send me a word in answer to this request; for our loss would be irreparable should M. Sulzer, who does not receive any pension, refuse to be any longer a member in ordinary.

While writing this long detail to your majesty, I have the fever; and my letter is well worthy of a man who does but enjoy half the faculties of his mind. Had I the power, I would willingly add something on literature; but, at present, I should reason like a man destitute of common sense.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 16, 1762.

YOU work miracles as great as those of the Messiah. Your letter has produced the same effect on me as the words of Christ did on the man in the palsy—"Take up thy bed and walk."—I was in bed with a cold, accompanied by a slight fever. I rose, dressed myself, jumped and capered like a young kid in my chamber, and am at present in good health; not the least pain of body, not the least alarm of mind. You are, in truth, at once the greatest king, and the greatest apothecary, in Europe; your powders and emulsions are superior to all the prescriptions of pharmacy, ancient and modern.

Should the diversion, which your majesty has done me the honour to mention, take place, Fortune will, in three months, repair all the wrongs she has done you in six years; should it not, the peace between the Russians and Swedes is of such moment, that it will induce you patiently to support the failure of this aid, of the utility of which I am very sensible.

What

What gives me great hopes, from this diversion, is that the Austrians begin to be seriously disturbed ; which I clearly perceive, by their affectation in asserting, in all the public papers, that you wish to make peace with them. I am convinced they are desirous to employ the stratagem of an approaching peace to put off the diversion.

The Danish envoy, the arch-prophet of misfortune in former times of grief, wears the most melancholy face. He is exerting himself every where to report that there is no prospect of peace between the Russians and Prussians ; and, when he saw the prisoners arrive from Magdeburg, he loudly affirmed, to all our ministers of state, that it was merely an exchange, much of the same kind as that you caused to be made by general Willich. Our good people of Berlin were simple enough to believe him ; the poor folks were very much afflicted, and count Reufs came to me, in great consternation, to repeat the discourse of the Dane.

It happened that I had received your majesty's letter an hour before ; and, without farther explanation, I assured him there was not a word of truth in the assertions of the Danish minister ; and that I would pledge myself for the conclusion of peace between the Russians

and Swedes. Our people of Berlin recovered all their joy; your name passed from lip to lip with benedictions; and you ought to be in excellent health, for, within twenty-four hours, more than fifty hogsheds of wine have been drank to it in Berlin.

The Russian officers, who have passed this way, have testified the utmost joy at being the friends of the Prussians. They were magnificently regaled, for three successive days, by various families, and they have drunken copiously to the health of your majesty, and of the emperor Peter III. whom God bless and prosper. May all his enemies, and yours, expire with shame and vexation, at beholding their odious cabal destroyed in a moment; and may they endure as much affliction as they have caused so many worthy people to endure! There is not much philosophy in the wish, but philosophy itself is unable longer to contain.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET.

LETTER CXXXIV.

From the King.

Undated.

BY your letter of the 16th I perceive, my dear marquis, you have exactly seized the true situation of our affairs. You have understood every thing perfectly well; and you find your Danish envoy is no better than a block-head. We have a Russian here, who passed through Berlin as a courier, with whom I am very well satisfied; and, unless every principle of the human mind should be nothing better than absurdity, we must have made peace with Russia and Sweden by the opening of the campaign.

With respect to other hopes, I shall not receive any certain intelligence sooner than the beginning of the next month. Hopes are truly our due; for how great is the bitterness, the grief, in which we have passed our lives for these six years! Balm must be poured into the wound, which believe me is both necessary and good.

I am very glad I have cured you; this of all the political acts of my life will be the best. I

with the present letter may be a new restorative, and that it may complete your peace of mind.

To divert you, I send you a Fable which I had the whim to write, and which will soon be followed by another; my mind is not sufficiently calm for serious works, I therefore amuse myself with fables.

Ah! my dear marquis, when shall I escape from this accursed galley? I confess to you that the political pilot, and the general hero of romance, are the most troublesome trades of this sublunary world. Epicurus was in the right; his sage ought never to interfere in public affairs. Perhaps we should do better were we to choose our own situation in life; but Fate is our master, and assigns us to this or that post, which it is our duty to hold.

Inform me whether the people are satisfied at Berlin, and be persuaded I love you always.

Adieu.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, March 1, 1762.

YOU ask whether the people are satisfied at Berlin; I answer they are in a delirium of joy. The wealthy make banquets; those of middling rank regale their families; and benedictions are every where bestowed on your majesty, as well as on the emperor of Russia. You both ought to live these three hundred years, were the prayers of the people, glass in hand, but heard.

All the foreign gazettes speak of the union between Russia and Prussia as a thing effected. Thus all Brandenburg participates the joy of Berlin, and every letter that arrives here affirms the satisfaction is no less in other cities than it is in the metropolis.

With respect to myself, your majesty may be assured that, should the diversion in question take place in the month of March, my poor brain will be unable to hold any longer. I have been two days fit for bedlam, in the excess of my joy. I am very much the humble servant of philosophy, but there are times at which Heraclitus himself

would say with Horace—"There is a charm in
"madness."

I think, like your majesty, that to pour balm into the wound is most proper. This will be the means of preventing the ill-intentioned from giving a second wound. Your majesty always thinks well, and on this occasion admirably well.

The Fable your majesty has done me the honour to send is charming, and written with that elegant simplicity which becomes this kind of poem.

The news of the cession of Port Mahon to the Spaniards, which I sent your majesty some time since, and which you then regarded as fabulous, is verified. France gains three millions of piastres by this cession.

Never did I think before I should wish to grow older; but on this, as on many other subjects, I find I am deceived; I wish at present to be six weeks older.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CXXXVI.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Breslau,
March 6, 1762.

THE joy of the inhabitants of Berlin, which you describe, has communicated itself to my heart. I have a foretaste of the sensations I shall feel at the conclusion of a general peace. Our intelligence from Petersburg is such as we could wish; perhaps peace is there signed at this very moment.

I have not received all the news I could have desired from a certain quarter; but I know there are troops on their march, and that the fear at Vienna is great.

I have every reason to hope that I shall succeed; as soon as I shall be more certain, I will partake that satisfaction with you, which so fortunate a circumstance will give me.

In fine, my dear marquis, the clouds begin to disperse; and we may again hope to see a fine serene day, and the sun in all his splendour.

I send you a Tale which I have written; while composing it, my head was full of the works of Boscuet, and his impertinent variations, in which all

the mystic reveries of the school are explained. Angry at such absurdities, I wrote a fable to revenge myself on those who pass their lives in spreading such nonsense. The obscure grotto of the east is the subject of the allegory, and the whole is clear enough to stand in no need of a commentary.

Rejoice, my dear marquis; continue calm, and in good health. Courage returns with hope; and I expect once more, before I die, to see you at Sans-Souci, where we will peacefully philosophize, without being *in periculo mortis*.

Adieu, dear marquis; God bless you.

L E T T E R CXXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 9, 1762.

THE intelligence which your majesty has done me the favour to send is admirable, nor have I any doubt that you will incessantly receive that which will accomplish all your hopes.

We are not only enraptured at Berlin by being relieved from our most dangerous enemy, but are delighted to find we may do to our two principal

principal enemies all the wrong they wished to do, but which they have not done, to us. Your citizens of Berlin are really good people, and are well worthy of the affection you shew for them. Rejoicings are preparing here, an account of which I shall send you for your amusement, as soon as an armistice, or a suspension of arms, shall have been signed at Stargard. Imagine what they will do when peace shall be signed with Russia; for the people are so angry with the Austrians and French that they care but little concerning peace with them.

Your Tale is ingenious, charming, and light; not a line, not a word, not a syllable to correct. The idea is new, and the application just. I have the honour to repeat, this little work is charming. You have infused all that gaiety into it which your mind must feel at the present situation of your affairs.

I wish the diversion may take place, for it would completely punish your enemies for their audacious phrenzy, to which they imagined they need not set any bounds. But these haughty Austrians and proud French no longer have any advantage, except in the Dutch gazettes, all the editors of which they have bought. In one of the 29th of February, and again on the 2d of March,

March, there was a formal denial of any negotiation on foot between Prussia and Russia.

I wait the arrival of a letter from your majesty, in which you will deign to inform me whether I may regale these gentlemen with a short work intitled—*Lettre d'un Baron Westphalien à un Bourgeois d'Amsterdam* *. I have long been out of patience by the rhodomontades of the Austrians, and the gasconades of the French.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R · CXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, March 23, 1762.

YOUR majesty no doubt has received the letter I did myself the honour to write in answer to yours of the 6th of this month, I therefore shall not repeat how ingenious and how charming I thought your little Poem.

The great and good occupations which at present employ your time, must necessarily intrude upon your customary moments of leisure.

* A Letter from a Westphalian Baron to a Citizen of Amsterdam.

I cannot

I cannot however forbear to inform you of two pleasant circumstances, the first of which, perhaps, you already know.

The king of France raised a bastard, which he has had by one mademoiselle de Roman, to the rank of duke of Vendome, a legitimate prince of the blood, at the moment of the child's birth. It is affirmed that, had this mistress been brought to bed at Versailles, La Pompadour would have been immediately dismissed; and that the duke de Richelieu had ordered matters in the best manner he could to produce that effect. The news comes from the Dutch ambassador, and he received it from the ambassador of France.

The other article makes much noise at Versailles. On the day of the exile of marshal de Broglio, the play of *Tancred*, by Voltaire, was acted at the French theatre in Paris. In the fifth or sixth scene of the first act there are lines, the sense and words of which are nearly these—
 “Tancred is a hero; and, notwithstanding the
 “cabal by which he is banished, the people
 “love him, and know his merit.” Whether the actresses intentionally applied this passage to M. de Broglio, or endeavoured to speak it in a superior manner, the lines produced so great an effect in the pit that they were applied to the marshal. The applause was excessive, and the actresses was obliged to repeat them several times.

The court ordered the lieutenant-general of the police to enquire into this affair; and the actress has been obliged to make oath she had no other intention than that of acting her part well. Some sixty of the applauding auditors have been taken up, against whom formal prosecutions are commenced. Can any thing on earth be more ridiculous, except the arrets of the parliaments for the expulsion of the Jesuits, and those of the council for their protection? All Paris is more occupied by these affairs than by Martinico, where the English papers affirm that, after having been twice repulsed, they have at last disembarked twelve thousand regular troops.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Undated.

YOUR letter found me in a fever, which is the return of an epidemic fever, now common in the city, and a description of which Catt can give you.

Your two articles of intelligence from Paris bear the characteristic of frivolity, the goddess
of

of the country. I do not, however, believe that, had madame Raimon * been brought to bed at Versailles, La Pompadour would have been dismissed; because the king of France is a man of habit, and has placed his confidence in that woman, who, during seven or eight years, has governed his kingdom to his satisfaction. But even should this creature be dismissed, do not imagine I should be any great gainer; a Saxon faction is formed in that country, which would be equally inimical to my interests.

What meanness is it in the court to prosecute the fellows who applauded the passage in *Tancréd*! This really is most wretched conduct; as indeed is the opposition between the council and the parliament for and against the Jesuits.

But my head is so weak, my dear marquis, that I can add nothing more, except that the emperor of Russia is a divine man, in honour of whom I ought to erect altars.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I can add no more.

* This variation of the name exists in the Berlin edition. T.

L E T T E R CXL.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 26, 1762.

I HAVE enjoyed the sweet satisfaction of conversing, during the space of two hours, with M. Catt, concerning your majesty; and he has very candidly indulged my curiosity, and answered all my questions. How often have I pitied your majesty! But I return to my old prophecy; at length, thank Heaven, our woes are all ended, and nothing remains but joy. M. de Catt has informed me that he met with count Hordt near Breslau; you have therefore learned many more things which must have been very satisfactory.

I have read your answer to M. D'Alembert with infinite pleasure; there is nothing which ought to or can give him offence; it is ingenious pleasantry, without bitterness or gall: yet really the mathematicians, D'Alembert and the French academy, are altogether becoming madmen. What is this philosophic spirit, so much vaunted, which leads us to prefer Virgil to Tasso*, and to retail with an important and decisive mien so many paradoxes? Thus, in the times of Seneca

* Did not the marquis mean to say Tasso to Virgil?

and

and Lucan, the taste of the Augustan age began to decline.

M. de Catt is going to pass three days at Wittemberg, to converse with his countryman, who has entreated him to meet him half-way on the road between Berlin and Leipzig, being in haste to return to Switzerland. I congratulate your majesty on your possessing a person so truly attached to you as is M. de Catt. You will recollect what I had the honour to write to you, in the month of April last, concerning this gentleman. I had then heard many things, of which I have since obtained more certain information, which demonstrated to me how essential it was that your majesty should not admit into your private apartments, in which your papers are deposited, any but men of known probity, who should be entirely devoted to you.

Your majesty has done me the favour to inform me you will allow me to take the waters at Sans-Souci. I shall profit by this permission, with your good leave, toward the end of the next month; that my health may be entirely recovered, and that I may be enabled to pay my respects to your majesty, when I shall have the happiness to see you again, with an assiduity which may compensate for the chagrin which has been occasioned by your absence.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R C X L I.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 29, 1762.

I SIT down to answer the letter your majesty has done me the honour to write, the moment it is come to hand. Man is not made for continued happiness. For four days I had been tranquil and cheerful, and I am now alarmed by a thousand fears for the situation of your health. I hope, notwithstanding, that your disease will have no bad consequences, and that the epidemic fever which is at Breslau is similar to that which we have here at Berlin, and by which, within this fortnight, almost every body has been attacked; but which, when most obstinate, seldom continues longer than seven or eight days.

What you have done me the honour to say concerning the emperor of Russia, has given me double pleasure; first, because, though your body were incommoded, your mind must be contented, which will very much contribute to the recovery of your health; and again, because I hope the friendship, which this great prince so very ardently testifies for your majesty, will, by the union of your common interests, as well as your

common affections, conduce to put an end to our troubles, and lead to peace. When shall I have the pleasure again to see you in tranquillity ?

Your majesty may judge of my present fears ; let me earnestly entreat you, should you not have time to write a word yourself, because of the affairs by which I know you must be encumbered, to cause one of your chamber domestics to write me an account of the state of your health. I protest I shall not live till I hear from your majesty.

You cannot, sire, but be well satisfied with the prince of Prussia. Every person who has seen him at Magdeburg relates a thousand circumstances in his favour. You certainly perform excellent things ; and the act of sending for him to be with you is most excellent, for a thousand and a thousand reasons. He will profit more in one day with you than he would have done in six months at Magdeburg.

I once again request your majesty would send me news of your health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, April 3, 1762.

YOUR last letter, in which you were kindly pleased to inform me you were rid of your fever, perfectly tranquillized my mind. For M. de Catt being gone to Wittemberg, to visit his relation, I knew not what this fever might be, and was continually tormented by the most gloomy ideas, recollecting the malady that was prevalent at Breslau, the winter that I was there. Fortunately count Hordt, who departed two days after the arrival of the letter which you did me the honour to write, had said that it was only a fever that was the consequence of a cold. Count Reufs brought me this good news, and came to me for that express purpose. I loved him much before, because he is a good and excellent citizen, devoted to you in heart and mind; but I now love him still better; and had he presented me with a hundred thousand crowns, he would not have given me one quarter of the pleasure.

Martinico is taken, and, exclusive of the inestimable advantages of that conquest, the result

sult will be of still greater utility. Thirty-four ships of war are immediately enabled to act against the Spaniards, with an army of sixteen thousand regular troops which will be equal to an army of eighty thousand in Europe.

Beside this advantage, another very considerable one has happened. An earthquake has just destroyed the port of Carthagena in America; the ramparts and fortifications are most of them fallen, and the two forts of Santa Margarita, which defended the entrance of the harbour, are entirely ruined. Nothing can be more certain than this intelligence, and a narrative of the disaster is inserted in all the papers. Thus are the Pondicherry and the Cape Breton of the Spaniards destroyed, without having afforded the English the least trouble.

I neither see black nor white *. Not black, because we may employ, this campaign, that army with which we faced the Russians, and the corps which we opposed to the Swedes, against the Austrians. Your majesty must have perceived, from my letter, that I never placed any great dependence on the persons whom I met at the house of M. d'Andrefel. Thus, not having founded the least hopes on their assertions,

* A proverbial expression, the sense of which cannot be misunderstood. T.

I do not estimate them at any thing, in my manner of reasoning.

I do not see entirely white, because I know that the utmost prudence of a general may be rendered ineffectual by the stupidity or the cowardice of subalterns; of which truth, unfortunately, I have but too many examples. But I confide in your intelligence and your superior talents; you will supply whatever shall be wanting.

What if you were to doubt, and say—How if prince Ferdinand were to be beaten?—Why should he be so, since he has hitherto always beaten his enemies?—What if prince Henry were to meet with some disadvantage?—Why, being now stronger than ever, should he not act as well as he has done hitherto?—Well, but what if the emperor of Russia were to die?—Why should he die? He is young, is in good health; and the present age is not the age of Medicis—What if I, the king of Prussia, were to be beaten?—If ever that should happen, I consent to lose my head.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

From the King.

April 8, 1762.

YOU are cheerful and good-humoured, my dear marquis, nor shall it be my part to afflict you by my melancholy dreams : beside, our thoughts, be they gloomy or gay, have no influence on affairs ; they continue their train ; accident, good or bad, must be taken as it comes ; and our griefs must be endured, should fortune be averse.

I am at present deep in negotiation ; all goes as I could wish at Petersburg ; and I venture to tell you that this country, from which you hoped nothing, will fulfil my wishes, though a month later than I could have desired. Toward the month of May, there will be a fine fantastical festival held in our poor Europe, and such are the means by which we must put an end to this detestable war.

I am once more reading the Ecclesiastical History of Fleury, to which I accustom myself without difficulty, and which will hold out to the month of July. It is a tough morsel, which will furnish food for half a campaign. I say

no more at present ; my dear marquis, I am in expectation of great news, which I will send you before it has time to cool, as soon as it comes to me.

Adieu: I embrace you.

L E T T E R CXLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, April 11, 1762.

YOUR majesty's letter has made my hopes mount ten degrees. You speak of my cheerfulness ; but, be this as great as it may be, I still think it very moderate ; and cannot but consider it as a miracle that my poor brain should not be totally turned since the month of February. But should what you mentioned to me relative to the people whom I formerly met at the house of M. d'Andrefel take place, I will be answerable for nothing ; I shall perhaps be obliged to stick some thirty pins into my breech, to oblige the vital spirits to descend, instead of mounting with too much rapidity up to the brain. Pleasantry apart, should I ever learn that the motions which you expect to be made have taken place, I would not be

answerable that my joy should not excite emotions of dangerous excess. I am well sensible of the result of an event similar to that for which you hope, and of which I cannot but see the happy consequences; nor can I be entirely calm till I shall learn it has actually happened. Permit me, Sir, to cite a line from one of our best poets:

*Je le souhaite trop pour le croire sans peine *.*

But I see so many good things on another side, that I wait with patience for that which I wish for most at present.

Your majesty no doubt knows that the English have taken thirty-six of the largest privateers of France at Martinico. The loss of this island, in one single article, is equivalent to thirty millions of livres. (One million, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling). A hundred thousand chests of sugar were annually transported from Martinico to France, each chest containing six hundred weight, which amount to sixty millions of pounds of sugar. If we rate each pound at ten sous, which are equal in value to three of our old gros, you will find, without any great calculation, the sum equals thirty millions of livres; consequently the double of the revenue which the electorate of Hanover yields in the most flourishing times

* For this I wish too much to give it easy belief.

of peace. True it is, the subjects of the king of France, and not himself, suffer the loss of this considerable sum; but the wound is equally deep with respect to the kingdom, and will long continue to bleed.

It is here affirmed you are putting the palace of Charlottenburg in order; if your majesty happen to recollect the charming papering for rooms which was shewn you by the officers and the ladies at Leipzig; and should you think proper to make use of some of it, considering that, because of its cheapness, a room may be prepared for little more than forty crowns currency; the paper manufacturer at Rheinsberg, who is a gentleman in the suite of prince Henry, and who is come to request my recommendation to your majesty, will send you some of the best patterns.

M. de Catt is better; he has met with a good surgeon here who has afforded him much relief, and who has promised to enable him, in twelve days, to depart to join your majesty, and to make the campaign without inconvenience to himself, provided he will but be careful, and not hereafter be as bad a jockey as St. Paul, of Christian memory.

All the public papers say that the fleet, which has taken Martinico, is gone to pay a visit to
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the Spaniards at the Havannah, and, by the potent arguments of powder and ball, to borrow some millions of piastres—So be it.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXLV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, April 23, 1762.

I WELL suspected, from certain things which I had read in the public papers, there were some dark manœuvres carried on at a court in which, since the change of the ministry, weakness appears to have succeeded fortitude, in spite of the unhopèd-for advantages fortune seems to bestow on people who are so little qualified to profit by them.

I hope, should the ancient subjects of Mithridates put themselves in motion, all will do marvellously well, and that you may then suffer those who act so contrary to all rules of politics to commit as many follies as they please, without being of any injury to yourself. I expect a confirmation of intelligence from the ancient enemies of Pompey with infinite impatience; I place much more faith in their promises than in those

those of the people I formerly met at the house of M. d'Andresel.

I have requested M. de Catt, who will have the honour to deliver my letter to your majesty, to mention a thing to you which may be useful, but which I durst not entrust to paper, because no one can tell what accidents may befall a traveller. M. de Catt, with whom I have had the pleasure daily to converse of your majesty, can likewise inform you of the life I have led for these ten months.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

April, 1762.

I FORGOT to give M. de Catt the two pieces of M. d'Alembert which your majesty did me the favour to communicate; I have the honour to return them. They contain good, bad, and singular things. It is vexatious to find that the spirit of paradox, which soon or late will ruin good taste, and at length be destructive of common sense, should succeed to the fine genius of the age of Louis XIV.

I learn

I learn your majesty is at work on the fathers of the church. I have often had the honour to remark to you that nothing was wanting to your course of reading but some dozen volumes in folio ; after which you might dispute with Don Calmet and all the Benedictines on earth.

I am running over the scripture, and the remarks I make may be serviceable to the notes I am writing on Timæus the Locrian, whose works I have translated, they having never appeared in the vulgar tongue. This Timæus the Locrian is a madman of the first rank ; not a word of sense throughout his works : but, as his philosophy was the basis of that of the Pythagoreans, and of the primitive Christians, they will furnish me with excellent dissertations.

When I left your majesty, I was stammering Greek ; and when I shall meet you again, you will find me as learned as Dacier and Salmasius. For my knowledge in this tongue, which serves as my amusement, am I indebted to the chagrin which I have suffered for eighteen months. My mind must either have been occupied, that it might not be disturbed by the affliction which this infernal war has incited, or I should have died with grief. Remain persuaded, sire, that, except yourself, no person has more sensibly felt the misfortunes with which we have sometimes
been

been assaulted. I was overwhelmed by two mortal fears; the first regarded the safety of the state, and the second, which was much the most considerable, related to your own personal preservation. At length, thanks be to Heaven, our alarms are all ended, and, in a few months, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing your majesty, tranquil and contented, in the bosom of peace, and enjoying that sweet repose which your watchings and your fatigues have well merited.

I expect a letter from your majesty to-day or to-morrow, and am in firm hopes of there finding a confirmation of the good news which your majesty has done me the favour to intimate, and which incited a degree of pleasure which entirely restored me to health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVII.

From the King.

Breslau, April 29, 1762.

I BEGAN to languish like a flower that had long been deprived of the dews of heaven, when Catt gave me your letter. This celestial dew reanimated and restored me to life. It is
I pleasant,

pleasant, my dear marquis, that you should be reading the New Testament, and I the fathers of the church. What demon can have inspired us with these ideas ? Tell me by what sympathy our minds have been directed, at the same time, toward the same subjects ! I believe we neither of us knew the other's intention.

I confess I am astonished at the extreme wanderings of the human mind, whenever I read such disputes concerning dogmas and mysteries ; however, I can say nothing which you do not already know. I can see at this distance, by your deportment, that you are wishing for good news : I am fortunate enough to be able to gratify your wishes.

From Russia I expect a courier with the treaty of peace and alliance on the part of Sweden. The mediators break the wind of every post-horse in their great speed, that the peace may be signed.

Nor is this all ; the successor of Mithridates is actually in the field with a large reinforcement. The people on whom the new-born sun looks down are equally in motion ; treaties are made ; all is arranged ; so that we may depend on the accomplishment of my hopes. Such is the news for which we are waiting, but
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it is intelligence so good that we may pardon its tardiness.

I therefore at present hope, with good reason, that this year will be the end of our labours. Catt has mentioned poor Gotter to me, as a man in the agonies of death. Alas ! I shall find nothing but the walls and you, my dear marquis, at Berlin ; no more acquaintance, not a soul, but shall perceive I have survived this whole unfortunate generation.

I have business which prevents me from continuing ; I will tell you more when I shall have more leisure. Adieu, my dear, my good, my only marquis ; I embrace you with all my heart.

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, May 3, 1762.

YOUR majesty must have previously imagined the joy which the receipt of the last letter you have done me the honour to write must inspire ; and I was the more delighted because knowing how much good *might* arrive from the east, I never could well persuade myself

self

self this good *would* arrive. Now more than ever, sire, you must be careful of your health, that you may bring all things to perfection, and afterward retire in tranquillity to Sans-Souci, there to recover from all the enormous fatigues which you have without relaxation for six years sustained.

I have no literary intelligence with which to acquaint your majesty, except two articles which prove that the wicked are sometimes though not always punished. La Pompadour has lost an eye, and the other will soon suffer the same fate. This woman will undergo the doom of *Œdipus*. A proof of the existence of providence is still something ; though to render this proof irrevocably convincing, she must undergo the destiny of *Cartouche*.

The Jesuits will soon be entirely rooted out of France : their colleges are already shut up, and their wealth, in part, bestowed on the principals of the seminaries who are to be charged with the education of youth. Here is an event unexpected by all Europe. I have the honour to send your majesty an engraving, done at Paris, the execution of which is very bad, but the thought is ingenious enough. All orders of monks are put in a sieve, which the first president shakes, and the Jesuits drop through like
the

the chaff from wheat, which last is the symbol of the other orders, that remain in the sieve as wheat remains after winnowing.

Your majesty's letter has inspired me with so much courage that, perceiving nations so various about to open their campaigns, I am likewise about to open mine; and, since your majesty has had the complaisance to permit me to take the waters at Sans-Souci, I will leave my shell, out of which I have not crawled for these ten months, and will go to proclaim to the nymphs and deities, of the Havel, that they will soon again see your majesty on its happy banks. Oh may this moment suffer no delay!

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R. CXLIX.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Breslau, May 8, 1762.

YOU have furnished my table with the best of all possible ragouts; I there produced your engraving of the Jesuits; each man made his remarks on the subject, and we have all laughed, which has not been usual in my house since the afflictions which we have suffered.

The

The French are pleasant madmen : I love enemies that incite laughter ; and I hate my morose Austrians, inflated with pride and impertinence, and who are good for nothing except to make men yawn, or to insult the unfortunate.

I have no news for you at present but that I am in hourly expectation of my couriers. Perhaps you will think that for some months past I have been in continual expectation of couriers : the remark is true : they will however arrive at last, and our impatience only will have suffered, by delay. In this there is no harm ; for we generally gain by subjecting our natural restlessness to a short regimen of patience, which promotes the practice of morality and the study of wisdom. I am now assembling the army, and making the final regulations to the preparations for the campaign. Pray Heaven it may be fortunate, and the last of those I shall ever make.

I am glad you are going to Sans-Souci ; my imagination will know where to find you : I shall follow you into the park ; I shall say, the marquis is now playing on the viol di gamba ; at such an hour he is commenting on the New Testament in Greek ; I now perceive him repeating tender lessons with Babet ; in such an alley he is drawing up political plans ; and

while he re-visits my apartments he remembers me.

I shall afterwards hold a short ideal dialogue with you ; but some intelligence of Daun will arrive, and the agreeable illusion will vanish, be blown away by the wind.

My situation is not yet entirely free from certain overhanging clouds, which occasionally obscure the serene rays that enlighten me. This would much disturb me, had I not been taught by experience that all the evil we fear does not befall us.

The troubles will soon become general over all Europe ; and I imagine, after every brain shall have attained the height of phrenzy, reason will then as suddenly return, like people attacked by inflammatory fevers, who, after a long fit of delirium, fall into profound sleep, and as they awake recover their senses. Ah ! how long does this happy moment keep us in expectation ! How great are the labour-pains of Europe, before she can be delivered of the so much desired peace !

In peace or in war, fortunate or unfortunate, absent or present, you will ever find me the same ; that is to say, loving and esteeming you as I always have done.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; good night, I am going to bed.

LETTER CL.

From the King.

Undated.

I WISH, my dear marquis, I were able every day to send you agreeable news, but we have none of any kind at present, except that Sweden will immediately make peace, and that I imagine the conclusion of that with Russia will arrive on the 20th. It will be about this time likewise that I shall receive news from the place in which you were with M. d'Andresel. I have already had intelligence from the countries which were anciently governed by Mithridates, and such as gives me the greatest pleasure; the only difference is that the good has arrived a month too late.

In despite of so many favourable appearances, you cannot imagine how many vexations assault me, coming from places at which I certainly did not expect to meet them. In fine, I believe myself predestined in my old age to see my patience exercised in all possible forms. Thy will be done, O Lord!

I shall become patient, marquis, and this is all I shall gain, which however, the balance struck, will be no trifle. Daun and almost all the Au-

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strian

strian army are coming to meet me ; I shall have great need of aid ; and, unless some good diversion should take place, I shall find it difficult to terminate the war.

Adieu, my good marquis ; continue to love me, and be persuaded of my esteem.

L E T T E R C L I.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Potsdam, May 18, 1762.

I ARRIVED here yesterday, in the delightful abode of Sans-Souci, and I have this day been informed, by a letter which has been sent me from Berlin, that you have beaten the corps of general Beck, and taken eight battalions prisoners. You treat the Austrians as ill in Silesia as prince Henry does in Saxony. This is a good commencement of the campaign ; and should those things happen which, according to my conjecture, ought to happen, about the beginning of the next month, I have no doubt but by the end of the year you will revisit the happy banks of the Havel, and will come to behold the superb things which you have caused to be done at Sans-Souci, and which I unceasingly contemplate

plate with new admiration. All here is in the best order possible. For the love of God therefore beat these accursed Austrians as often as you can, that your subjects may finally have the pleasure of seeing you happy and contented after so many vexations.

I have had the honour to send your majesty the metaphysical chimeras of D'Alembert relative to poetry and history. Is it possible, with so much understanding and mathematical knowledge as that man possesses, to be so little consistent! I think our best writers at last will say, with father Canet, "No reasoning, my lord; how wise the maxim; no reasoning!"

Your majesty is now in the midst of fatigues and dangers. How pleased shall I be to see you delivered from them! With respect to myself, a useless burthen on earth, my life is passed in wishing for peace, in studying things but little agreeable, and in learning the meaning of words.

The Jesuits have been banished the court of France, their colleges entirely suppressed, their novices dismissed, and their total exile from the kingdom is spoken of as a thing that must happen in the month of August. I am very willing to believe that the ministry has discovered some manœuvres of these worthy people, which

are unknown to the public, and on which it is determined to keep silence. It is certain that two days after the assassination of the king, two Jesuits were sent to the Bastile, nor has it been since known what is become of them. Add to this when Damiens came to Paris he left the society of Jesuits at Arras. How will you act at the peace, toward these venomous insects? The catholic princes afford you a fine example.

I mention all this, sire, only to lead you to reflect on the adventure which happened to you last campaign. I cannot comprehend why the wretch Warkotsch has not yet been condemned and punished in effigy. I am often enraged at your too great mildness. The wicked have need to be restrained by fear.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potfdam, May 24, 1762.

I HAVE the honour to answer your majesty the moment after I have received your letter. Of the pleasure which it caused me, I leave you to judge. We now see ourselves not only actually in sight of harbour after the fearful tempest,

pest, but we shall safely sail into this harbour in which we shall soon forget all past woes.

I hear from Berlin that the joy was there excessive; the courier arrived at ten in the evening, and the people were all night in the streets, and the windows of their houses were illuminated. Nor have we been less joyous at Potsdam, though we should be still more so had we the happiness to see you there. I flatter myself the war will be ended this winter. The alliance with Russia is equal to all the other alliances, with nations, circumcised and uncircumcised. With this single aid, I regard peace as certain in less than four months; and, should some people keep their promises, and put all in motion, it is impossible that you should not be at Sans-Souci before the month of September.

The queen of Hungary, according to letters from Vienna, which come from good hands, has passed half her life lately in praying to the Virgin, and the other half in weeping. To punish her for the evils which her ambition has during seven years drawn down on mankind, I wish she might undergo the doom of the sisters of Phaeton, and melt to water*.

I have the honour to be, &c.

* The sisters of Phaeton were changed into poplars. T.

L E T T E R CLIII.

From the King.

Bettlern, May 25, 1762.

I CONGRATULATE myself, my dear marquis, to find that Sans-Souci may become an agreeable abode to you during the fine weather of spring ; and, did it depend only on me, every thing would already have been so arranged as to enable me to come and join you. The campaign, however, which is about to open, must be added to the six preceding campaigns : whether the number seven, which the peripatetics and monks suppose to be mystical, must be accomplished, or that it was written in the book of fate, from all eternity, that we are not to have peace till seven campaigns shall have been completed, this we are obliged to submit to.

My brother has begun well in Saxony ; but I know not what tales are told concerning us ; we are still in cantonments ; there are none but some parties of hussars in the field, and neither Daun, Beck, nor any of the Austrians, have hitherto been liable to attack. Our campaign cannot, at the soonest, begin before the 20th of June, till when do not expect to hear of any thing remarkable on our part.

I have

I have already thought of the monks of Silesia; as soon as I shall know they have been expelled France, I have my petty project in reserve; and I only wait to sweep the country of Austrians, that I may act there as I please. You therefore comprehend, my dear marquis, that before we gather the pear we must suffer it to ripen.

How great will be the difference when we shall visit Sans-Souci in its present condition, after having lived there before the war, and shall compare the state of prosperity, in which we then were, with our actual poverty; and the good company that was assembled there with solitude, and the bad company which now remain! All this, my dear marquis, afflicts me, and renders me thoughtful and gloomy.

I am very much of your opinion relative to D'Alembert. It were better not to write than to publish paradoxes, or trifles. Blaise Pascal, Newton, and this man, who were all three the greatest mathematicians of Europe, have uttered much nonsense; the one in his *Moral Apophthegms*, the next in his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, and the present on *Poetry and History*. It therefore does not follow that mathematics render the mind so perspicuous as they are said to do; though the prejudice in
favour

favour of geometry has rendered this saying an axiom; but it is not even so much as a problem, remembering that the great geometricians, whom I have just cited, have all of them reasoned so wretchedly.

Let us, my dear marquis, confine ourselves to the pleasing arts; perfection is not for man. We feel some indulgence for the mistakes of the poet, and place them to the wanderings of his imagination; but we do not pardon the mathematician, who ought to be exact and true. For my part, feeling that man cannot always be so, I attach myself more than ever to the delights of poetry, and to every branch of study that can embellish and enlighten the mind. These are the baubles of my old age, with which I shall amuse myself till my lamp shall go out. Such studies, my dear marquis, soften the mind, and temper the severity of vengeance, the rigour of punishment, and, in fine, whatever is harsh in monarchical governments, with a mixture of philosophy and indulgence, necessary to those who govern men who are not perfect, and because the governors themselves are in the same state.

In fine, my dear marquis, be it age, reflection, or reason, I regard every event of human life with much more indifference than I formerly did. When any thing is to be done for the good

good of the state, I still exert some vigour; but, between ourselves be it said, this vigour is not the impetuous fire of my youth, nor the enthusiasm which I formerly felt.

It is time the war should end, for my homilies are sleepy, and my auditors will soon laugh at me.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I wish to be able to send you agreeable news: you will soon receive that of the conclusion of peace with the Swedes; the other you will not have before the end of June. Continue to love me; and often recollect the warrior philosopher who is more erratic than Don Quixote, and all the knights of the Calprenede.

L E T T E R CLIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R

Potsdam, June 2, 1762.

IF your couriers have been waited for as long as the Messiah, they still have produced wonderful effects. Four centuries were necessary for the Messiah and his disciples to make a Christian of a Roman emperor; you only require four months to bring an empress to reason; and it is a much greater miracle to prevail on a woman

to

to hear reason than to baptize a prince who endeavoured to make a party among the Christians, which might protect him from his enemies.

Had I not been pre-informed for some time, the two last letters which I received from your majesty might have produced the same effects on me as the joy of the peace has occasioned, in the brain of one of the principal clergymen of Berlin. The poor man became mad the very day on which *Te Deum* was sung; and he caused it to be inserted in all the gazettes, that he would preach on the morrow in verse. Accordingly he composed his sermon, and the whole city went to hear him. His brother priests took great offence, and spoke of nothing less than of suspending the poetical preacher. Should you continue to write me intelligence equally good, you must not be astonished, sire, should you receive letters to inform you that I have read a discourse before the Academy of Sciences *in lingua Franco*; which is the Provençal language, as spoken by the Algerines. The reading of your last letters, actually, for more than an hour, made me seem like a petrified man, whom joy had rendered totally stupid. As your majesty has very well said, it was necessary to be sensible of the condition in which we were, six months ago, to have a proper conception of all the

good and the marvellous of that in which we now are.

I have had the satisfaction to be the first who celebrated your union with the emperor of Russia, that brave and worthy prince, on whom may heaven heap its favours. Since I received your majesty's letter, I have invited the burgo-masters, and several of the good citizens of Berlin, to dine with me ; and I borrowed two small cannon, four pounders, from the town-hall, which the citizens employ on their festivals ; I ordered them to be drawn on the road to the foot of the colonnade of Sans-Souci, and from noon to seven in the evening, which was the duration of the dinner, we fired eighty times, drinking to your majesty's health, and to that of the emperor, your good ally. Yesterday, which was Sunday, the citizens of Potsdam made great rejoicings ; I however preceded them three days.

I wish to be a month older, although I do not find it very pleasant to grow old ; but I feel all the delight I shall enjoy in the months of July, August, and September. Though I wish for peace with the greatest impatience, I still shall be vexed to see it concluded before you shall have received a good bottle of balm from the queen of Hungary, which she shall be obliged to bestow

bestow as a cure for all the wounds which she has given us.

Allow me to repeat a short parable.

An honest man was crossing a certain forest: he was attacked by three thieves; they gave him several wounds, and, not satisfied with robbing, wished to murder him. In the mean time two brave men came up, who flew to the aid of the honest man, and seized the thieves. One of the defenders of the traveller said to him, “ Take my advice ; let us kill your enemies. If “ we suffer them to escape, before the end of “ your journey, you have still another forest to “ pass, into which they may go, and again lay “ wait for you.” The traveller took the advice of his defenders, the thieves were exterminated, and he finished his journey in safety.

It is not enough to have overthrown our foe ; it is necessary to take precautions that he may not renew his attacks after having risen.

Here do I conclude my oriental style, and have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLV.

From the King.

June 8, 1762

YOU joke, my dear marquis, in your letter concerning my couriers: the misfortune is things do not proceed quite so fast as I wish. The peace with Russia is concluded, and is in reality a very advantageous event; but it has deranged my negotiation at Constantinople: many things are necessary to cover so many heads with one hat, or to conciliate interests so various. We negotiate, time flies, and we do not rid ourselves of our embarrassment. The Tartars will nevertheless march. They consist of a hundred thousand men; and it is to be hoped that by putting them in play the others will follow.

Your parable is admirable, but means must be found to put it in practice. The great difficulty is to overcome that power; the remainder would be easy. Speculation, my dear marquis, travels fast, but performance slowly, because it meets with a hundred impediments on its road. I abandon myself to that destiny which guides the world at its pleasure. Politicians and warriors are but the puppets of Providence; the necessary

cessary instruments of an invifible hand. We act without knowing what we do, and the product of our cares is often the reverse of our hopes. I therefore fuffer things to proceed as it fhall pleafe God; working in the dark, and profiting by favourable circumftances, when they happen to prefent themfelves.

Czernichef is on the march to join us; our campaign will not begin till toward the end of the month; but there will then be a fine clamour in this poor Silefia. In fine, my dear marquis, my wants are great and difficult; nor can we yet pofitively fay what turn all thefe things will take.

Pray for me; and do not forget a poor devil, who is very reftive in his harnefs, who leads the life of the damned, and who notwithstanding efteems and loves you fincerely.

Adieu.

L E T T E R CLVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, June 17, 1762.

I AM very far from joking, concerning your courtiers; the news they bring is too good to be made a joke of. Be it granted you that the
Turks

Turks will not be in motion this year; still the situation of affairs appears to me very admirable. I am not M. Euler; yet am I able to calculate that sixty thousand Russians and twenty thousand Swedes are eighty thousand enemies the less; that twenty-five thousand men which we employed against the Russians, and five thousand against the Swedes, make thirty thousand; to which add twenty thousand Russians to join us, and they will form an army of fifty thousand men which may act this year against the Austrians.

With respect to the Turks, I have never included them in the estimate, because I had seen and read a letter, written on the 20th of April, from Constantinople, by an ambassador who was a very good Prussian, to another ambassador as good a Prussian as myself, I cannot say more, in which it was asserted that every thing was peaceable at Constantinople, and that the Turks would not march this year. But provided the hundred thousand Tartars, who are on their march instead of the Turks, should keep to their engagements, I perceive the queen will be very ill at her ease. I allow, had the Turks begun to move, the affair would have been over in two months; but should the hundred thousand Tartars make an irruption into Hungary, the

Austrians must at least detach a corps of twenty thousand men. As soon as I shall hear that this detachment has taken place, I shall judge of the certainty of the promise of the Tartars, and thence shall draw an absolute omen in favour of peace to be concluded in the month of November or December.

If the English papers may be believed, and especially the Monitor, the wisdom of Solomon does not preside over the councils of state at London. There are very strong and very energetic pieces published against the favourite, lord Bute. The speech of Pitt to the parliament is worthy of Demosthenes; yet with all this we see the duke of Newcastle, after having served the house of Hanover forty-five years, and having expended five hundred thousand pounds sterling in its service, is reduced to ask his dismissal. He has generously refused a pension of six thousand pounds sterling, which was offered him. What would the good king your uncle say to all this, were he to revisit earth, or to many other things which I dare not commit to paper, but which your majesty will easily divine?

Did not the event which has happened in Russia prove the little foundation of all human projects, what is now passing in England would be an excellent demonstration.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLVII.

From the King.

June 19, 1762.

WERE I circumstantially to enter with you, my dear marquis, into all which has happened in the east, you perhaps would find I had reason to think some good consequences would result. But affairs are not entirely desperate; I still have favourable glimmerings. The Tartar ought to be on full march, and I hope at least he will afford me some twenty thousand auxiliaries.

There is a rebellion among the janissaries at Constantinople; they accuse the grand Visir. At the departure of my letter, the eighth part of the city was in ashes, and the conflagration still continued.

Well may you say that all our reasonings on futurity, all political conjecture, are but frivolity. Who can better assert this than I, who have, during six years, seen myself tossed by all the political tempests of Europe, and in danger of shipwreck; yet hitherto preserved, as if by miracle, notwithstanding that I am still in every kind of danger. All which has happened in Russia could not have been foreseen by count Kaunitz;

neither could what has passed in England, the most odious part of which you are ignorant of, enter at least into my calculations. The result of all this is that he who governs kingdoms, in times of trouble and agitation, does but exercise the trade of a dupe. This is what perfectly disgusts me with such ungrateful and fruitless labours, and brings me back more than ever to the love of letters, which we may cultivate in silence, and in the bosom of peace. A man of letters works on something certain, whereas the politician has scarcely any given principles.

The Russians will join us on the 30th, and with their arrival our inactivity will end. I shall then attempt hazardous adventures, at the risk of all consequences. This is the seventh act of the tragedy. The piece is too long. The emperor of Russia produces the peripetia; and I must labour at the denouement, that its close may be as little mischievous as possible. A multitude of previous arrangements at present occupy me. All must be predisposed and foreseen, before our end can be accomplished. Add to what I have said the warmth of the negotiations which are carried on at present, and you will easily judge of the cares, the perplexities, and the labour they cost me, as well as of the

the

the weight which my poor shoulders are obliged to bear.

In fine, my dear marquis, we approach the events by which this campaign and the whole war must be decided. We must be resigned, and wait patiently, since but the least part of what is yet to happen depends on ourselves.

Adieu; live in peace, write to me often, and depend upon my friendship.

L E T T E R CLVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

June 28, 1762.

MAY I venture to ask your majesty what our good friends the Tartars are doing? I could wish they were now in Hungary.

The Danes have done that which we ought to have done. Aided by a train of artillery, they have borrowed a million of crowns from the people of Hamburg. I am vexed at this, because the Danes will have the money; not to mention that the people of Hamburg are generally in the Austrian interest. I delight to see the imperial cities, which without reason are devoted to the

court of Vienna, punished for their love to that same court, which profits by every thing.

I have no doubt but the battle which the French have just lost in Germany, will increase the credit of Mr. Pitt in parliament, where he predicted, in the most confident manner, in his speech, all which the prince of Brunswick has accomplished.

It is generally affirmed here that you have the finest army in Europe now in Silesia: may it answer to the hopes of the king its commander, and shew by its bravery it is worthy of its chief!

I return your majesty infinite thanks for the kindness with which you have permitted me to remain six weeks at Sans-Souci. In four days I shall be at Berlin, that I may receive more speedily the news of your majesty's health and victories.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER CLIX.

From the King.

Bunzelwitz, July 4, 1762.

I HAVE not, my dear marquis, any of that fine paper with elegant borders which adds such a grace to the letters of your countrymen, and therefore am obliged to do without it in answering you. Be kind enough to be satisfied with a simple relation of what is passing, on such paper as I have.

You will find us in the camp in which we so long remained last year. We are now about to march among the mountains, to turn marshal Daun, and oblige him to enter Bohemia. I do not know how far we shall succeed; but there is nothing better to be done. To drive an able general from all the advantageous posts which he has previously assumed, is a grand enterprize. Fortune will no doubt do much; but who can confide in the jilt?

You ask me news of the Tartar; my intelligence says that he is now to send me some troops: the letter is dated the 11th of June. This diversion will take place later than I hoped it would have done; but still it will have its effect.

Our peace and our alliance with Russia, in one respect admirable, have occasioned an alteration in the good dispositions in which the Orientalists were. Whether our enemies will profit by this remains to be known. All politics, my dear marquis, rest on a pivot, and nothing can be depended upon with certainty, which to me is prodigious cause of disgust. The calamities of past years, and the ruin of most of the provinces, added to every kind of misfortune which has happened to me, have rendered me more a philosopher, and more indifferent to human events, than Socrates could ever be. I shall soon attain a state of perfect apathy. It is time, my dear marquis, the war should end; I am no longer good for any thing; my fire is extinct, my strength forsakes me, I do but vegetate. Thus circumstanced, a man might be an ornament to the cell of a Cenobite, but is no longer fit for an intercourse with mankind.

Prince Ferdinand has gained a considerable advantage over the French, of which I am very glad; but I could have wished the affair had been more decisive. Four thousand men from eighty thousand, and there remain seventy-six thousand: these are more than enough to oppose prince Ferdinand, whose utmost force
does

does not exceed fifty thousand. But he is thus enabled to gain time; and such a check will discourage a man like Soubise; he is among the worst of the generals the French ever have had.

My poor margrave Charles is dead, and I am very sensibly afflicted; for he was one of the most worthy men in the world. We must soon go and join him; now or presently, it is much the same thing.

Adieu, my dear marquis; write to me occasionally, and be persuaded of my friendship.

L E T T E R CLX.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

SIRE,

Berlin, July 14, 1762.

A COLD in one eye, and rather a severe one, has prevented me from writing sooner to your majesty.

You have just executed, without the loss of a man, by the finest manœuvres you ever made, what apparently could not have been performed without one or two battles. You are now master of all the mountains of Silesia, and the Bohemian passes. I wish to see your army there

do all the harm to the Austrians which they have done to us, and finally oblige these madmen to put an end to a war which, for seven years, has laid Europe desolate, and which Austrian pride and French phrenzy maintain, and foment, with so much fury.

It is here affirmed, as a certainty, that the emperor of Russia has just taken the command of his army. Had my wishes been accomplished by providence, this good and worthy prince would not have marched into Germany before the general peace. The whole happiness and tranquillity of Europe reside in his person, &c. Your majesty feels the whole force of this, &c.

I have seen the Russian ambassador who is just arrived; he seems to me to be a very prudent man, greatly attached to his master, and entirely free from the ridiculous mystery which is attendant on most politicians, and on many ambassadors. I am convinced your majesty would be satisfied with him, should he ever have the honour to see you.

And are we then, sire, to have the pleasure and the happiness of beholding you here? Never was the Messiah expected with so much impatience; nor was his arrival ever so necessary to the Jews as yours is to the Prussians. But I am sensible, as all reasonable people are, that

we must have patience; and remember that, not till you have obliged your enemies to make peace, can you quickly re-establish all which your absence has disordered. Never was proverb more true, fire, than that which says, When the cat is away, the mice play.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXI.

From the King.

Undated.

OUR affairs, my dear marquis, began to wear a tolerably pleasing face, when I suddenly saw every thing deranged by one of those political events that neither can be foreseen nor prevented: the rest you will learn.

The peace which I have concluded with Russia still subsists, but the alliance is puffed away. The troops are all returning to Russia, and I am now reduced to my own resources: we have however beaten two detachments of Austrians; but whether this will be productive of any real good remains to be proved. I suspect not; and here am I again in a confined, difficult, and delicate situation. I am Fortune's top; she whips

whips me where she pleases. We have to-day taken a thousand men and fourteen cannon : but this decides nothing ; and every thing indecisive does but add to my embarrassment.

I can well believe many things of various kinds go wrong at Berlin ; but what can I say ? Fate, which guides all things, is more powerful than I am, and I can do nothing but obey. Grief is the inmate of my heart ; my perplexity is excessive ; but what can I do ? Be patient. If I now write you a foolish letter, accuse politics : I am so weary that, could I but see an end to this unfortunate war, I believe I should renounce the world.

Adieu, my dear marquis ; I embrace you.

L E T T E R CLXII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, July 27, 1762.

WHEN I had the honour to receive your last letter, I had four days known the event which has happened in Russia *. How

* This, and the hints in several of the foregoing letters, all relate to the conspiracy against, and the assassination of, the emperor Peter III. T.

was it possible that this catastrophe should neither have been prevented nor foreseen, when every circumstance concurred to shew it was a thing to be expected? The manner of thinking of the Russians who passed through Berlin, the discourse of the Russian minister at the Hague, and the letters that were written from Petersburg, all predicted this melancholy event. A foreign minister at the court of Russia, six weeks ago, wrote here, to a minister well inclined toward you, an account of all which has happened. He foretold that, if great care were not taken, events would soon spring up which have but too effectually taken place. Having seen the letter, I advised this minister to speak to count Finck, and he accordingly informed him of all he had heard; unfortunately the information was of no effect.

If your majesty will be pleased to recur to my last letter, you will there find that the fears which I expressed by half phrases were but too well founded. God grant that those which I entertain relative to the continuation of the peace may be false. You inform me, sire, that all the Russian troops are on their march to Russia. I wish they may; but M. von Saldern, the envoy from Holstein, a man devoted to your majesty, told me yesterday that he believed

lieved no such thing. The packets that arrive from Prussia are all sealed with the Russian arms *; and the manifesto which has been published by the court of Petersburg, to retake possession of this country, has occasioned a general consternation.

How, sire, could you determine to leave Stettin in the condition of not being able to resist an assault? Three battalions less in your own army, and two detached from that of prince Henry, would surely not have decided the fate of war, though they would have done of the principal, and even of the only town that can secure Berlin, and all Brandenburg.

Excuse me, sire, for taking the liberty to tell you what I think on this subject; true zeal prompts me to speak. Would to God I could but see your majesty tranquil and happy, and die the hour after! The sacrifice of my life would be a trifle, for it becomes burthensome to me; I am weary of living in a world governed by blind fortune, and inhabited by men more malignant than the most ferocious animals.

Prince Ferdinand has gained an advantage over the French, the news of which your ma-

* The province of Prussia was at that time under the power of the Russians. T.

jeſty muſt have received. My grief is ſo great that I was almoſt inſenſible to this event ; nothing can affect me but the preſervation of your majeſty, and the hope that I ſhall finally ſee you ſurmount the ſtrange caprices of fortune.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXIII.

From the King.

[Undated.

YOUR apprehenſions, my dear marquis, were ill-founded ; we have nothing to fear from Ruſſia, the troops of which are returning to Muſcovy. With reſpect to the revolution, it was what I dreaded ; I even informed the emperor, that he might take proper meaſures. His ſecurity was too great ; he was diſpleaſed when ſpoken to of precautions ; and I am in poſſeſſion of a letter which he wrote to me in anſwer to the advice I gave. His miſfortune originated in his determination to ſeize on a part of the property of the clergy. The prieſts concerted a revolution, which was immediately executed. This prince, though poſſeſſed of every quality of heart that could be wiſhed, had
not

not an equal share of prudence, of which quality much is requisite for the government of that nation. I am this day informed he is dead of the colic.

You have every reason to entertain no fears for Berlin, my dear marquis; with respect to ourselves, we have attempts to make which are equally difficult and perilous, but which we must nevertheless make. Pray for the aid of Fortune in our behalf, with whose aid every thing is effected, and without it nothing.

I am very much of your opinion concerning the vanity of all human things, and the malignity of mankind: such have been my continual remarks to you; and these are what make me disgusted with the world, and wish an end to this fatal war, that I may be able to finish the remainder of my life in peace.

You see the instability of human projects; you have been more forcibly struck by the revolution in Russia, than by any other of the accidents of which I have been a witness: yet, during the seven campaigns which I have made, I have met with nothing but baffled hopes, unexpected misfortunes, and, in fine, every caprice and sport which chance can produce. After thus much experience, my dear marquis, a man of fifty may be allowed no longer

ger to wish to be fortune's bauble, but to renounce ambition, and all those follies which do but too much delude inexperienced youth; and all those prejudices which the fashionable world feeds and perpetuates.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I embrace you.

L E T T E R CLXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August 9, 1762.

YOU have restored tranquillity to my soul, and my chagrin has given place to the hope of again seeing you happy and in peace, before I shall quit this planetary existence, to go in search of Epicurus, in some of the worlds which he first established in philosophy, and of which he was robbed by Descartes. This was no great crime, and I should willingly overlook the pilfering, committed by celebrated mathematicians on each other, provided they would but preserve common sense, when they do not calculate.

Nothing, sire, can be more charming than the Epistle which you have had the goodness to send me, by M. de Catt. How well timed is

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your

your jocularitv ; and how perfectly well do you paint the exact calculator, the eternal enemy of taste, and the destroyer of imagination :

*Dans les cerveaux brûlés jadis la fable éclosé,
Créa tous les dieux vains de la métamorphose ;
Improprement donna le nom de Jupiter
Aux régions des cieux occupés par l'éther ;
Par Vénus désigna la féconde nature ;
Bacchus était le vin ; Cérès l'agriculture.
Nouvel iconoclaste armez-vous de rigueur ;
Extirpez et ces dieux et leur aimable erreur ;
Et, rejetant le sens qu'offre l'allégorie,
Vous la remplacerez par la géométrie.
Au lieu de nous conter comment le dieu des eaux
Protégea, contre Pan, Syrinx, dans ses roseaux,
Philosophe solide, il faudra vous rabattre
À prouver, en rimant, que deux fois deux font quatre.
O l'excellent secret de plaire, et de charmer * !*

If your majesty will please to exchange these

* From the heated imagination 'of poetry, fable of yore created all the false gods of Ovid. She improperly gave the name of Jupiter to the ethereal regions of the heavens; the fecundity of nature she called Venus; Bacchus, wine; and agriculture, Ceres. Arm yourselves with rigour, ye new zealots; extirpate these gods and their amiable errors; reject Allegory, and let Geometry be her substitute. Instead of reciting how the god of the waters protected Syrinx, among his reeds, from the pursuing Pan, do you, heavy philosophers, descend to plain truths, and prove in rhyme that two and two are four. Oh what an excellent secret have you discovered, to please and to enchant!

fifteen lines against a thick volume in duodecimo, on which I have, for this year past, been assiduouſly at work, and which I imagine I ſhall have the honour to ſend you very ſhortly, I ſhall be very well ſatisfied to give you the labour of twelve months for that of a ſingle hour, and ſhall further believe I ſhall have gained cent. per cent. by the bargain.

There is a line in your Epiſtle which muſt abſolutely be corrected—

*Ne lui dépeignez point le martyr qui vous preſſe **.

We are obliged to read,

Ne lui dépeignez point le martyre qui vous preſſe †.

and then the verſe is deſtroyed †. This is the only objection I am able to make to your charming Epiſtle.

I have ſeen the promiſed wife of M. de Catt, who appears to me to be very amiable. She is very handſome, and her character is ſpoken of very advantageouſly. It is no trifling affair for a man of letters to poſſeſs a good wife. I ſhould have died ten times, or become a mad-man three years ago, had I not been fortunate enough to poſſeſs mine. Of women may be

* Paint not to him the martyrdom for which you are in haſte.

† By the ſyllable added. T.

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ſaid

said that which Æsop said of the tongue—there is nothing better, nor any thing worse.

I take the liberty to send your majesty one of the gazettes of Utrecht, in which there is an article concerning the ancient subjects of Mithridates. I should be much vexed were it true, though I shall no more be astonished; for, in this case, the affair, of which your majesty did me the favour to speak, has not yet taken place *. It is affirmed your majesty is besieging Schweidnitz; when you have taken it, send us postillions, that our good people of Berlin may rejoice; and do not do as you did the last time you recovered the fortress, when you did not deign to send us a simple messenger. We have suffered so many vexations, that it is but just we should enjoy a little pleasure.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXV.

From the King.

Undated.

YOUR letter, my dear marquis, found me in labour. I am to be delivered of Schweid-

* The irruption of the Tartars. T.

nitz. I am obliged to cover it, on all sides, against this Daun, who orders a dozen of his delegates to hover round, and render our enterprize abortive. He thus obliges me to be perpetually attentive to the motions of the enemy, and to such intelligence as I endeavour to procure. Hence you may imagine my poor brain is not very poetical.

The line you complain of shall be corrected : it is a trifle ; but I ask time, till our siege shall be concluded, which thus far goes on very well. I protest I have no vanity ; and I attribute so much to chance, and to the troops, in the success of my enterprizes, that I am not seized with the mania of postillions. However, if some you must have, to inspire you with joy, have them you undoubtedly shall.

The gazette writers have lied, according to their noble custom. The news you have heard has been inserted in the public papers by the court of Warsaw, to pacify the nation concerning the march of the Khan of the Tartars, who is skirting their frontiers. I shall at this time say nothing to you of the Pontus, nor of the Empire of the East. I am so weary of predicting that I will write nothing but fact, in future. Have a little patience ; my whole attention is employed in the operation I have begun, which

I assure you would afford sufficient employment for a youth. What a life must it therefore be for an old man, worn and broken as I am; whose memory decays, and who perceives his senses and force of mind to be perishing! There is a time for all things, in the life of man; and, at my age, my dear marquis, books, conversation, an easy chair, and a cheerful fire, are all that remain. They will very soon be succeeded by a coffin.

Adieu, my dear marquis; live happily and peaceably, and do not forget me.

L E T T E R CLXVI.

From the King.

Peterfwalde, August 13, 1762.

THE conjectural art, my dear marquis, is confined, and so shall be as long as the world shall endure. To determine gallantly, and to suffer things to take their own turn, is no doubt the only wise mode in which we now can act. You will at present allow the truth of what I said, when I refuted the apprehensions which had been credited, from popular report. We have been so long in the school of adversity,

adversity, that the public is credulous in behalf of misfortunes which fear predicts; yet all the good, or all the ill, that is dreaded, but seldom comes to pass.

To restore your comfort, I inform you that my attempt on Schweidnitz hitherto proceeds exceedingly well; eleven fortunate days more, and our hopes will be accomplished. I shall send you much more good news: I expect your credulity should turn to the side of fortunate events, that I may announce them. I shall therefore wait till you write to me, that I may serve you according to your wishes.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I am fatigued, and my age renders exercise more severe than it formerly was. Write to me, and do not doubt of my friendship.

L E T T E R CLXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, August 19, 1762.

I AM in haste to have the honour of complimenting your majesty, on the very considerable and very effective advantage, which you have just gained, over generals Laschy, Beck,

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and

and O'Donnel. I hope this will soon hasten the arrival of the postillions, with whom you will have the complaisance to regale our good people of Berlin. Should the taking of Schweidnitz procure us peace, at the end of the campaign, or during the course of the winter, it will be equal to the taking of a kingdom. Is it not time, after a dreadful seven years war, that peace should repair so many evils, and that the barbarous fury of your enemies should cease, and not make any more useless efforts, which do but maintain horrid confusion, and most cruel disorder throughout Europe?

There is much talk of peace between France and England: if this peace should be productive of a peace between all the belligerent powers, I wish for its arrival; but, if it be followed by no such effect, I cannot see any great utility that it will be of to us, especially should it take place according to the insinuations of the public papers. Your majesty ought to know, better than any one, all that passes on this subject; therefore, as I perceive you are satisfied, I am undisturbed by all the reports that are circulated.

Whenever your majesty speaks of your pretended old age, I immediately run to my almanac, and perceive I am nine years older than

than your are, having, within this month, entered my fixtieth year: I then softly shut my book, without saying a word; but rest much confused that a man who is ten years younger than myself should complain of his old age. Should you ever return in peace to Sans-Souci, you will become ten years younger, and I fifteen; after which, in joy and tranquillity, you will live as long as Abraham, and I as Jacob, and Sans-Souci will be to us Arabia the Happy.

We wait here with impatience, for a farther account of the late advantage which you have gained, and of which we have only heard in the gross; though the news spread universal joy through Berlin. May we soon have the pleasure to see you arrive there contented, and in possession of perfect health.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CLXVIII.

From the King.

Peterfwalde, Aug. 19, 1762,
after the affair of Reichenbach.

MY verses have explained my thoughts, relative to the postillions, whom you have seen arrive at Berlin. It is good to rejoice at having escaped a great misfortune: we are, however, my dear marquis, far from having completed our designs; and, to speak frankly to you, I imagine we shall have another crisis *, before the capture of Schweidnitz. Whatever shall please chance, destiny, or providence, that shall come to pass; for certainly all three, or one of the number, have or has a greater part in the accidents of the world than the foresight of man. I leave you to make your own philosophic reflections, on this dark and impenetrable subject. Should you happen on any lucky discovery, you will by communication give me pleasure.

In the mean time, let me entreat you, my dear marquis, not to forget me.

* By *crisis* the king means *battle*. T.

L E T.

LETTER CLXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, September 2, 1762.

I HOPE that, at the time when your majesty shall receive the letter I have the honour to write, Schweidnitz will be taken. You have had the bounty, sire, to promise us postillions; and in return I send your majesty a small packet, with which I hope you will be satisfied. It contains two copies of the new edition of the *Poesies Diverses*, in a very convenient pocket size. Nothing can be more elegant than this edition, nor could a better be printed at London or Paris. Half of this edition departs to-day for Dantzic: nine hundred copies have been demanded by the Russian officers. You have the art of gaining the affections of people who have been your greatest enemies.

M. de Beaufobre has superintended the new edition of the *Poesies Diverses*; and has acquitted himself with all possible zeal. He is a very worthy man, and will meet with some establishment * at the peace, should you think proper to give him a place, when you shall be more calm, and freed from all perplexity. Your glory is

* Some wife with a fortune. T.

immortal,

immortal, but you are too good a philosopher to imagine your body to be the same. Should this young man hereafter have the misfortune to lose you, what must become of him? Could he marry a woman with a certain portion, he would then be in no dread of want; but, to find such a wife, a place were necessary; and, to find a place, we must wait the return of peace. God grant it us, for we have great need of it; yet I think, with your majesty, it is necessary that it should be good, honourable, and permanent: I would rather otherwise suffer during ten additional years, if so it must be; and all good citizens ought to think, and do think, the same.

The English have taken the Havannah, with many millions, and several ships of war. Were not the Spaniards possessed by Satan, that they should declare war only to be crushed, and to render the obtaining of peace more difficult?

Your majesty may judge of our present inquietude, and of the impatience with which we wait to hear the fate of Schweidnitz. To-day is the second of September; I cannot think the besieged will hold out much longer, if they have not already capitulated.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXX.

From the King.

Peterfwalde, September 6, 1762.

YOU are, past contradiction, the most gallant of marquisses, to send me books so fine, and so well bound and gilt; nothing is wanting, my dear D'Argens, except the lining, which is very slight, and unworthy of the outside. I thank you however for the kindness with which you have thought of me. I congratulate the bookseller that he has been able to sell his edition in Russia, for this probably is the only country in which I may pass for a good French poet.

You thought perhaps you were sending me a reward, for my siege of Schweidnitz: but you have been deceived, my good marquis; I am as awkward in taking fortresses as in writing verse. One Griboval, who has more wit in his head than Hercules had in both his shoulders *, he and ten thousand Austrians have hitherto stopped us: however I must tell you the governor and his garrison are in the pangs of death. We shall immediately administer the

* The French proverb is, *Qui ne se mouche pas du pied*— that is, Who does not blow his nose with his foot. T.

viaticum. We are at the pallisadoes; and a mine, which will be blown in four days, will open the counterescarp, which will put an end to this difficult operation. These gentry know we wish to take them prisoners of war, and for that reason endeavour to wait the last moment. I cannot but own they are right.

To my great edification, I have seen that M. de Beaufobre thinks of propagating his illustrious race, according to the command of God given to our first parents—*Be fruitful and multiply*. I patiently wait the peace, and that confidence which he shall please to put in me, relative to his passion and his projects; and am resigned to all which chance shall command, respecting him and ourselves.

This peace, my dear marquis, appears to me a thing of certainty; though the *how* is a more obscure enigma than that which the Sphinx proposed to the Thebans. The present politics of Europe form a labyrinth in which we lose ourselves. I can find my way for a few steps, after which I am discouraged, and recommend myself to St. Chance, the patron of the mad and the thoughtless.

If it be true that the English have taken the Havannah, they will make a separate peace with France and Spain; there it will end; and

with respect to us, we must war on with our obstinate queen till her purse shall be emptied, and she will then become the most pacific princess in Europe. Such, my dear marquis, are great princes: while hypocritically pretending to peace, they are devoured by ambition. The queen, however, has discovered her character, during the course of this war; and I do not believe her word will be taken, should she endeavour to throw dust in the eyes of the public.

I think little Beaufobre acts with more sense; he wishes to re-people that world which this war has almost depopulated: and I hold it very wise in a man of letters to think of multiplication; for it is better to beget a child than a bad book: for my part, I shall beget neither.

I am preparing postillions, which I flatter myself I shall soon send off to announce the happy event, which now to me appears certain. New difficulties will present themselves; but do not let us think of them at this moment: let us conquer them in their turn, without being too anxious concerning the future. This is philosophy, my dear marquis. You perceive the progress I make; and certainly any man but myself, who had for seven campaigns been the sport of chance, and the opprobrium of preponderating powers, would have become a Marcus Aurelius. This is philosophy

sophy *per force*; but still philosophy will ever be good, in whatever manner it may be obtained.

Adieu, my dear, my divine marquis. Be satisfied; and calmly wait the mandates of that something, which laughs at the projects of man, and regulates all things in a manner unexpected.

My compliments to the good Babet.

L E T T E R CLXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, September 21, 1762.

I SHOULD have done myself the honour to have answered the letter your majesty did me the favour to write to me several days since, but that I have been ill for a fortnight. I have indeed felt myself incommoded for above six weeks. A most violent vomiting, from the efforts of nature, without the aid of physic, has relieved me. My disease was twice-digested bile, which remained in the body, and was the cause of very painful spasms. I may very justly call my malady the malady of the revolution of Russia.

It

It is very surprising that, having supported with tolerable fortitude all the afflicting accidents which have happened to us during the war, my philosophy failed when I first heard the news of this revolution. In fine, affairs have taken a fortunate turn, and we must think no more of the matter.

My present fears relate to Schweidnitz; nor can I persuade myself it will not be taken, before your majesty will receive my letter. Well may your majesty say, that M. de Griboval has more wit in his head than Hercules had in both his shoulders. How has that man been able, for the space of two months, to defend a fortress which was taken from us in two hours?—My physician has commanded me, from morning to night, never once to be angry; but where is the angel from heaven, who should remember the manner in which you have been served on some occasions, during this war, that would not swear louder than Beelzebub and his whole infernal crew? I see many sovereigns eating, drinking, sleeping, and doing nothing more, who are served with the utmost zeal; while you, battling, enduring heat and cold, partaking all the fatigues of your soldiers, and faring no better than them, during the whole campaign, are obliged to employ your whole

time in repairing the faults committed by persons whom you have loaded with favours. I will say no more on the subject; for I wish not to be in a fever again, and I cannot think of it in cold blood.

Your majesty is too kind, and does me too much honour, by your remembrance of my wife. I have been under obligations to her on various occasions for having recalled me to reason. She has effected more than all my philosophy, which would often have been fruitless, had not the advice of friendship given it additional force.

I shall be much obliged to you, if you will please to allow me to go and drink some dozen bottles of the spa water of Sans-Souci. I am ordered to take a little exercise, and by the aid of these waters, if possible, to impart a small degree of strength to my stomach and intestines. The best restorative, I believe, after that of knowing your majesty to be in good health, will be the news of the taking of Schweidnitz. For this I wait with the utmost impatience, and flatter myself this cursed governor must be obliged at length to capitulate, even though he should have St. John Nepomuzene, and all the Austrian saints, by his side in this fortress. Troy was taken in despite of Neptune and Apollo;
and

and are not the gods of Homer of more worth than gods created by popes?

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXII.

From the King.

Bægendorf, September 26, 1762.

I AM many excuses in your debt, my dear marquis, for having too presumptuously foretold an end to our siege by the twelfth of this month. We are here still, and have met with many impediments from mines. We are at present masters of the covered way; and, as the greatest obstacle is removed, I flatter myself the remainder will proceed with more haste. We are obliged to employ six weeks in the recovery of a place which we lost in two hours; which is no eulogium either on our abilities or our courage.

I am here myself, that I may hasten, as much as possible, our labours and our enterprize. I will prophesy no more, nor announce the day of reduction; but I think it may be still at some days distance. The genius of Griboval defends the place better than the valour of the Au-

strians. He is continually inventing artifices of every kind. In fine, my dear marquis, I am obliged to act both as engineer and miner. Succeed, however, we must at last. We are at present making a mine to blow up the envelope; I wait for the effect; after which we shall make an assault on the fortrefs, and probably the governor will be obliged to capitulate.

This path being smoothed, there are many others yet to traverse before the arrival of peace. But let us not think; rather let us surmount our successive difficulties. Let us recollect what we have to do to-day, and we will examine to-morrow what measures different circumstances may require us to take.

Such, my dear marquis, is our present situation. Be kind enough to support our ill address and ignorance with patience; in the mean time your chickens will thrive and grow fat: that which is waited for gives more pleasure than that which is easily obtained.

This is all the news I have to tell you, for nothing is more old or more durable than the friendship I have for you.

Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R CLXXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Bægendorf,
September 27, 1762.

I WISH I could tell you that Schweidnitz were taken, but so it is not; the tricks of mines have four weeks impeded us. We are now at the palisadoes. The enemy yesterday sprung a mine, which destroyed one of our lodgments; and the whole day was employed in its repair. In fine, we must have patience; for this Griboval defends the town as he ought.

The garrison, at the beginning of the siege, consisted of eleven thousand men; Zastrow had only three thousand. He is not by this wholly disculpated; though it is very certain that three are little more than the fourth of eleven, and that these people are much better able to defend themselves than he was.

The revolution in Russia gave you the colic; the reason of which was, that all which affects me very much affects you. If possible, however, testify your friendship without losing your health. Drink the waters at Sans-Souci; I hope they will do you good. For my own part, I am so

accustomed to adverse accidents, and am so indifferent to all the events of this world, that those things which, formerly, would have made the deepest impressions, now, glide lightly over my mind. I can assure you, my dear marquis, I have really made some progress in practical philosophy. I am becoming old, I approach the end of life; and my soul insensibly detaches itself from the idea of a world which passes away, and of which I shall soon take my leave. The situation of last winter, the revolution in Russia, and the perfidy of the English, are subjects, on which if we do but reflect, that well may render us reasonable. And who would during his whole life keep the worst of company, in this worst of possible worlds? I only cite a few causes of disgust; but I have had so many during the war, that my sensibility of soul is quite exhausted, and a callosity of unfeeling indifference is formed, which has rendered me scarcely good for any thing.

We have neither Neptune nor Apollo to oppose us, but one Griboval, and eight thousand men still, with miners who give good exercise to our patience. There is no beauteous Helena in Schweidnitz; but we are in want of an Achilles, whom I should prefer to St. Nepomuzene, St. Dennis, or St. Nicholas, could I find him.

him. We nevertheless push forward with our works as fast as we prudently can; and, if I can judge, I do not believe that from the beginning of the siege there have been six lost days. Where is the siege in which there are not as many? At least we do not waste our time in haranguing, like your talkative Greeks; nor in going to prayers, like your crusaders before Jerusalem and Damietta.

Schweidnitz will be taken; I am not disturbed on that subject; but there will remain another arduous task, over which I perceive an impenetrable fog, which prevents me from discovering objects and future contingencies. St. Hedwige, though my heavenly relation, affords me very little light or aid. I therefore abandon futurity to fate, and in the mean time continue to vegetate. My pen flows freely with my thoughts; perhaps I weary you: recollect however there is a pleasure in unburthening the heart, and pay some respect to my present situation.

Adieu, my dear marquis; I shall say no more at present, but conclude with assuring you of my entire friendship.

L E T T E R CLXXIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October 5, 1762.

I BEGIN by thanking your majesty for the favour you have done me, in permitting me to go to Sans-Souci ; but the bad weather which we have had for some days, and my languid state of health, keep me at Berlin in my own despite.

I recover courage, since your majesty assures me you shall take Schweidnitz, and that you are not disturbed on that subject. You require an Achilles ; are not you yourself an Achilles ? You do not want a hero, but an engineer equal to this Griboval whom your majesty praises with so much impartiality. The art of fortification, so essential a branch of the art of war, and so much cultivated in France, has unfortunately been neglected in Prussia. The late king held it in no esteem. You were too enlightened not to perceive its use ; but there are some abuses which require much time to correct. The siege of Schweidnitz is a proof that an able engineer is sometimes more essential, and more requisite, than ten general officers. Vauban alone,
by

by the places which he had so well fortified, was the saviour of France in the war of the succession. The allies gained a battle, and lost the remainder of the campaign in taking a town, by which they advanced two leagues.

I am in expectation of all that can happen on the part of the English ministry. As soon as Pitt went out of office, I foresaw every thing, and had the honour to write to your majesty, and to communicate my fears. I have still however some hope that a peace so shameful to the English, in which they will at once fail in their duty to their allies and to themselves, will not take place. The majority of the nation is highly incensed to perceive conquests which have cost so much blood given up without any reason; and the good faith of England lost to all the princes who might be induced to become her allies. After the example of the peace of Utrecht, and of the present, should it be concluded, who will ever confide in the English?

In fine, happen what will, let us recover Schweidnitz, and we shall afterward see what turn things will take. The eyes of all Europe are fixed on this siege, and its fortunate or unfortunate catastrophe may give a very different face to affairs. I have no doubt but that it will be as we could wish, and that this difficult enter-

prize will be ended before the bad weather sets in.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, October 14, 1762.

THE postillions are at length arrived; the pleasure with which they were received may well be imagined. At the first sound of their horns, my pullet and turkey were massacred, and will be eaten this evening, while we drink huge bumpers to the health of your majesty. I had also in reserve a ham dressed for the same feast, which will be a great ornament to the table, when surrounded by our principal academicians, who are excellent citizens, and who love your glory and immortal memory more than that of all past, present, and future philosophers.

You have rejoiced us all; though I fear I shall weary you by sending you a new work which I have written. I have endeavoured, however, with all my might, to render it as little

tle

tle defective as I could, and have been assiduously at work at it for a whole year.

Your majesty will easily discover in it the different tempers of my mind. I have written Dissertations on the three first chapters during our times of trouble, and on the fourth and the beginning of the fifth while Peter III. was on the throne: those at the conclusion were written after the revolution.

My intention has been for ever to root up superstition, on which the name of religion is bestowed. My Dissertations are—On hermaphrodites, and women lovers of their own sex—On the pretensions of the Rabbins, that Adam was a hermaphrodite, and that God created him two wives—On the history of these two wives—On French and Italian music—On epic poetry—On Cicero—Voltaire amply criticised on all these subjects—Reflections on this pretended philosophic age.

All these latter Dissertations were composed during our alliance with Peter III. The following are those which succeeded his death—That the great evils which have afflicted the earth for the space of two thousand years have been occasioned by priests—That they assassinated kings and emperors—That the fathers of the church were the first promoters of the doctrine,

trine, that subjects are allowed to revolt, and to kill their princes—That they corrupted history—That Constantine and Clovis, the two first christian princes, were more wicked than Nero and Caligula—That the emperor Julian was the model of good princes, and has been falsely aspersed by all the fathers of the church.

After having read this table of contents, your majesty will no doubt ask me, how I was bold enough to write truth so freely ; but, when you have read my work, you will allow that I have managed the subjects in such a manner as not to be liable to attack from the most outrageous bigot ; I venture to affirm that the manner, in which I have attacked superstition, is new and judicious. The idea of my plan is perhaps the only passable thing in my whole work. Would to heaven there were but the fourth part of the wit in it, which there is in your charming lines on Schweidnitz !

Now that Schweidnitz has surrendered, I shall take the liberty to recal to your mind the trifling agreement which you had the goodness to make with me, but which never could be carried into execution, because of the opposition of the Austrians, whom with all my heart I bequeath to Beelzebub. There were a certain pair of landscapes, by M. Harper, which had
been

been promised me by Frederic the Great, should I continue three weeks without being ill. I had already been a fortnight in full enjoyment of Herculean health ; and behold, on the 3d, Frederic departed from Potsdam to go into Saxony, and to change the epithet Great into that of Most Great ; and I saw my landscapes, which I had more than half won, vanish in smoke, like the projects of the Saxons. Now then that you have taken Schweidnitz, and which, according to me, is not one of the most trifling things you have done, you ought in conscience to pay me for my fortnight's health, and give orders, in your first letter, to have the pair of landscapes taken from the floor, where they remain, and make but a sorry figure ; where as I should hang them up, framed, in my chamber. They would rejoice my mind in splenetic moments ; and I should say to all who might come to visit me, Look ! here are two pictures given me by his majesty. A week is still remaining, before they can be totally and legally mine ; but the king does not act like those vile Austrians, who, whenever they have the power, infringe capitulations ; he has, with his own hand, written in his last letter, *granted* ; yet he might without forfeiting his word have written *refused*.

I have the honour to be, &c,

L E T.

L E T T E R CLXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, October, 1762; after having sent
his majesty the Timæus of Locris.

YOUR majesty has too much complaisance in approving the feeble work which I had the honour to send you. If any thing can merit some trifling indulgence in its favour, it was the intention with which it was written. You must have perceived, while running it over, that fanaticism, on which blind men have bestowed the name of religion, is there continually attacked either directly or indirectly. This may cause my book to be read with some pleasure, by reasonable people; but, in other respects, what is a work of erudition when compared to a work of wit and imagination? It is a heavy and tardy camel marching by the side of a Spanish gennet. One of your Epistles contains more thoughts, and more ingenious strokes, than three folio volumes by Scaliger; the former I compare to a necklace, which in its small circumference contains the worth of a million in diamonds; and the latter to a huge coffer, in which packs of cloth, linen, woollen, and other

kinds

kinds of merchandise, are heaped in disorder; and, though the contents of this coffer may be good, its worth is trifling when compared to that of the necklace.

Permit me to return your majesty thanks for the two landscapes, which you have done me the favour to grant with so much bounty. They are what you formerly caused to be painted by the son of Harper, when he was in want of some money to go to Rome. You have never thought proper to hang them up, and they were standing in the chamber next to that which prince Ferdinand of Brunswic occupied. It was really your intention to have given them me, as I had the honour to inform you. They make a splendid appearance in my cabinet, though they certainly were too indifferent for any one of your apartments, otherwise I never should have recalled to your mind the jocular task you inflicted upon me, previous to my being put in possession of them.

Your majesty ought not to doubt of the pleasure I shall feel to meet you once more, for this of all things is what I most desire; therefore, however feeble my wretched health may be, having almost continual diarrheas, which render me extremely weak, and from which I have not been entirely relieved by all the art of
medicine,

medicine, I think, were it required of me to make a journey of eighteen or twenty miles, which I might be able to perform in four days, I should have strength enough for the undertaking. But if it be necessary to go as far as Breslau, which I could not do in less than nine or ten days, debilitated as I now am, I much fear the same would again happen to me as did happen during my last journey, and that I should fruitlessly undertake more than I could perform; which would occasion me great perplexity, if I should happen to be taken ill at some place equidistant from Berlin and Breslau. In my present condition, a journey of twenty-four leagues, in the midst of winter, is of excessive length.

I am far, sire, from having forgotten the translation of Plutarch. I have already written a fourth of it; but this work will form a huge volume in folio, which cannot be accomplished in a day. You will no doubt ask me, why did I translate other works first? Sire, the two works that I have translated are not together equal to twenty pages of Plutarch, and have cost me but little time. With respect to the added Dissertations, I was induced to write them by two reasons. I composed those on Ocellus indirectly in answer to numerous libels, which
were

were published in Germany and France against philosophers ; and that with an intent to find an opportunity of attacking the philosopher of Sans-Souci, and all those whom he honours with his bounty.

I wrote the Differtations on Timæus of Locris to discharge on this most detestable of possible worlds a part of the bile which our enemies had excited in me, and to lash the herd of priests, who rejoiced in our misfortunes. This was the sole consolation I found in these perilous times. I committed my griefs to paper, and found some relief. My mind was too much absorbed by thoughts on our situation to be totally occupied by the thoughts of another man, which however is what a translator is obliged to be.

In these less tempestuous times I shall return to my translation of Plutarch. I shall print two volumes annually, and in three years the work will be completed. God knows whether I shall live long enough to finish it ; but, if not, some one will be found after me to translate what I have left ; and the bookseller, having printed the first volumes, will, for his own interest, be obliged to print the latter. There are some very fine dissertations in Plutarch, but there are others that are very feeble. I act like

those generals who do not imagine they shall remain long in the country, and therefore seize on the best they can find. I shall insert what I think the best in the first volumes, and shall leave the remainder for the last. Should I not have strength to conclude the work, I will publish what I shall have finished as a translation of the finest essays in Plutarch.

Your majesty must have felt some vexation lately at what has passed in Saxony; but after the considerable succour which you have sent thither shall arrive, the face of affairs will presently be changed. It is singular enough that the Austrians, having formed the project of attacking prince Henry, and of profiting by the great superiority they had over him, should wait till you had first taken Schweidnitz, and till the snows on the mountains of Silesia should render a part of your troops useless there. The action, of which they talk loudly, might have been injurious to us, had it taken place a fortnight before the surrender of Schweidnitz, but will be of no real utility to them now; since their loss has been greater than ours.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, October 31, 1762.

I WAS preparing to write to your majesty, and thank you for the bounty which you did me the honour to testify toward me in your last letter, when I heard of the splendid victory gained by prince Henry, the worthy brother of Frederic the Great, over your enemies. Permit me, sire, on this occasion, to present the most sincere and the most pleasing congratulations, which I hope will soon be succeeded by others, on the surrender of Dresden. Without any great pretensions to calculation, I perceive a decrease of twenty thousand Austrians in less than a fortnight. Ten thousand taken at Schweidnitz, six thousand in the battle which prince Henry has lately won, and four thousand left killed or wounded on the field. I imagine you will be satisfied with your campaign; Fortune no longer is a goddess enslaved by the caprice of the Austrians; she has freed herself from the yoke to which they appeared to have subjected her. What will Bute and all

his clan say, after having wished in so cowardly a manner, to abandon us ?

I should add many more things to your majesty ; but my cook has this moment entered, to enquire whether I shall not make a little feast this evening, and what I will have for supper ; having, the moment I heard the postillions horns, sent to invite some of our academicians to come, philosophically, and celebrate the glory of prince Henry, and the Prussian arms. We shall not crown ourselves with roses, because there are none at this time of the year ; we shall drink no Falernian wine, because our wine-merchants do not keep it ; but we shall empty a full bottle of excellent pontac, which will be drunken, wishing your majesty, as well as prince Henry, all prosperity and happiness ; for, with respect to fame, you have both of you more than enough, and any increase would but be pouring water into the sea.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, October, 1762.

NOTHING can be more natural or witty than the last poetry which your majesty did me the honour to send me. We are ready to say, that the shades of Chaulieu and La Fare are fled from the Elysian fields jointly to dictate to you. Might we be allowed to scold kings, I should most heartily and loudly scold your majesty, for speaking with so much indifference on a charming production, which Voltaire would include among the best of his fugitive poetry. I doubt whether he be able at present to depict, with equal force and truth, that indignation which we feel, while we read the history of the crimes and impositions of the pretended ministers of religion, by them committed age after age, and which in the present century they have endeavoured to augment.

I much fear, when you have successively read my Dissertations on Timæus, you will lose the little good opinion which you had conceived of the work; but I hope you will pardon me in favour of my good will, and will forgive the work,

F f 3

remembering

remembering the intention of the author. I had more than one design in writing my book, as you will easily perceive; but the two principal were, to root out superstition; and, in the person of the virtuous Julian, to avenge the numerous kings and great men, who have been indignantly treated by those to whom Imbecillity has given the name of *the fathers*, and who were really worthy of being the fathers of the idiots by whom they were thus called. I afterward thought it my duty to shew the absurdity of that Platonic philosophy, on which certain Christian dogmas have been engrafted, which faithless tyrants, like Constantine and Clovis, have artfully employed to accomplish their designs, and to form a party such as might favour their unjust power. I hope I have proved all these facts evidently, according to the confession of the most bigoted historians; and this, if I do not deceive myself, is to attack error in its last retreat.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXIX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, November 10, 1762.

IN my small judgment, the best mode is to make politics and war march with equal pace; to continue to beat your enemies, and lead them as brisk a dance as you have done during this campaign.

A report is circulated at this moment, as a certain fact, that preliminaries have been signed between France, England, and Spain; it is even asserted that the courier who brings your majesty this intelligence has passed through Rotterdam, on the 5th of this month. If this be true, however culpable the conduct of Bute may be, it does not surprize me; for I foresaw it when Pitt quitted the administration. What consoles me is that, the chance of war being so uncertain, prince Ferdinand, after many victories, might have lost a battle; and in this case we should have seen the French at Halberstadt, and along the Elbe, and should have been in the utmost perplexity. Should the French return home, though they were to deliver up Wesel to the Austrians, there will be a bramble the less.

in our road. I have no fear of the Austrians singly; and the success of your campaign is a proof that my opinion is founded on experience.

Your majesty asks me how it happens that I have a continued laxity, and why my bowels are so weak; and I answer, the cause of this was the taking of Schweidnitz in two hours, the surrender of Colberg, and the unfortunate end of Peter III. At each of these events I had an illness enough to have killed a horse; judge what must have been their effects on a body so weak as mine. I am now, sire, fifty-nine. I was born on the twenty-fourth of June, in the fourth year of this century; and when you call yourself old what am I to think?

I have no doubt, however, sire, but I may undertake a journey to Leipzig, and even without danger; for I have been seriously assiduous for some time to recover my health; and, though you treat me as a glutton, I live with as much abstinence as a capuchin during his noviciate. With this regimen, and some strengthening remedies, my physician has given me his word that I shall be well before the first of December, which is the day which your majesty has, in your letter, appointed for my departure. I have made my arrangements accordingly.

M. de

M. de Catt was married yesterday; he had the good sense to have the marriage performed without ceremony, and invited none but the nearest relations. There is but one universal opinion, concerning his wife, of whom every person relates a thousand good acts; and I believe her husband will be truly happy. In general I believe there is nothing so bad as wives; but he who is fortunate enough to have a good wife enjoys what a private person ought to think a great blessing, be he as much of a philosopher as he will. What would have become of me, without the aid which I have found in my wife, for these three years? I should long since have been in my grave. The public indeed would have found this a trifling evil; but I should have thought differently, I who have for these two years so ardently wished once more to have the honour of seeing your majesty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R CLXXX.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, November 22, 1762.

AFTER receiving your majesty's letter I immediately caused the axe to resound on the oak, the forges of Vulcan to be lighted up, and stripped the inhabitants of the forests of their skins: all which, in plain prose, signifies that I sent for the furrier to buy a good pelisse; and the coachmaker and the smith to put my half-ruined carriage in order, so that it might be able to carry me over bad roads without accident. I therefore wait your majesty's last commands, and the chasseur whom you will be kind enough to send me, to be my guide on the road.

Your majesty, in all the journeys I have hitherto made, permitted me to bring madame d'Argens with me, that she might watch over my querulous old machine, which is neither become more youthful nor better since these journeys: but I know not how to act at present, for I am ignorant of your good pleasure; I shall therefore wait, before I make any preparation, to hear how it shall please you to decide.

I have

I have the honour to thank your majesty for the porcelain of which you speak; but I can assure you, sire, my zeal toward your person resembles the manner in which the Jansenists love God, for himself alone; and were you not to testify all the kindness with which you honour me, I should notwithstanding be one of the most affectionate of your subjects, and one of your greatest admirers; though all people who respect great virtues and heroic qualities come under this description. Where is the rational man who, having seen all that has passed during seven years, can refuse his admiration?

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 20, 1763.

MY first care, on my arrival at Berlin, ought to be to thank your majesty for the bounty with which you have this winter honoured me, at Leipzig; but I know you hate compliments as much as you delight in doing good: I shall therefore but feebly express those respectful
 7 sentiments

sentiments of gratitude with which I am penetrated !

I found the city of Berlin in a state of joy not to be expressed; but which, however, will be increased when you shall arrive there. The peace has infused an air of cheerfulness into all countenances; and, on your return, you will imagine your good people of Berlin are become so many Sybarites, intoxicated by pleasure, and as wholly strangers to grief as if they had forgotten all the woes which have been brought upon them by the war,

Your majesty will no longer accuse me of indolence. I have performed a journey from Leipzig to Berlin in two days, during which I have travelled night and day, without leaving my coach. I departed four hours after your majesty, ill and in pain; but scarcely was I a league from Leipzig before I found myself much better; and the desire I had to revisit our holy land of Brandenburg entirely cured me. When I had passed a certain rivulet, which I was told separated Saxony from Brandenburg, I imitated the Jews when they arrive within sight of Jerusalem; I praised the Lord that I was now in the country of the elect, and of the church of God. Your majesty has really done very wisely in making peace. Thanks to you, I hope the
longest

longest journeys I shall make, for the remainder of my life, will be from Potsdam to Berlin. It is for you who have conquered Europe to travel over it, should you think proper; but, for my part, I am well satisfied with limiting my journeys to visits paid at the palace of Potsdam, and at that of Sans-Souci.

I wish, sire, I now saw you there, in full enjoyment of the immortal glory which you have acquired; but having been patient during seven years, I may well be so for the space of five weeks. This time however will to me appear long, as it will to all your subjects, who only aspire to the pleasure of seeing you again.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXII.

From the King.

Dahlen, February 25, 1763.

YOUR letter, my dear marquis, has completely relieved me from the apprehensions I had formed for your health. You were ill on the eve of my departure, but I was assured you had begun your journey on the next day. The great restoratives, air and exercise, have cured
I you.

you. This well proves the assertion of Boerhaave, that health is incompatible with a total deprivation of exercise. I know not what was the design of nature in stationing us on this earth. Were we to judge by our health, it should appear that she formed us rather to become postillions than philosophers.

Since our separation, I have been to Meissen. We have received letters from Vienna, which say that the preliminaries there occasioned universal joy, and that the empress scarcely could forbear to kiss the messenger. The ratifications of peace will arrive to-morrow, or the day after at the latest. According to my calculation, I do not believe I shall be able to quit Saxony sooner than the twelfth of March. A fortnight will be necessary to finish my affairs in Silesia, and I do not suppose I can be at Berlin before the twenty-ninth of next month.

The best of all this, my dear marquis, is, not my arrival, but, the arrival of peace ; at which it is but just that good citizens and the public should rejoice. For my own part, a poor old man, I am to return to a city in which I am a stranger to all except to its walls, and where I shall meet with no person of my acquaintance ; where immense labours await me ; and where I shall soon lay my old bones in a place of refuge,
and

and leave them to rest, undisturbed by war, calamities, and the rascality of mankind.

I am here in a country house, where I pass my time in retirement, with my usual occupations. I want nothing but my dear marquis, whom I hope to see at Berlin; for which reason take an airing sometimes in your carriage, my good D'Argens; pay this tribute to your health: your horses await you at Potsdam; they are already there; and I, unworthy I, entreat you not to forget me.

Adieu; my compliments to Babet.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, February 25, 1763.

I HAD the honour to write to your majesty the day after my arrival at Berlin. The joy and satisfaction which I met with among all the inhabitants have been daily increased. We meet with nothing but banquets and balls among the great, and feasting among the lower orders. Amid all these pleasures, I put up prayers for the happy return of your majesty. I am translating Plutarch.

I send

I fend ten times a day to ask whether the boats are in motion; and ten times a day am informed that they will not be afloat in less than a fortnight. This very much deranges the removal of my furniture; for, if I remove my effects by land, twelve carts will at least be necessary; which, at twenty crowns per cart, will cost me two hundred and forty crowns; instead of the twenty-five which I should pay for a boat, should it please the god of the waters to release them from their icy chains.

How is your majesty satisfied with your palace at Dahlen? I am in no pain lest you should not find amusement, to fill up the few moments which state affairs and the army will leave you, by reading the books which you have taken with you; and I imagine to myself that you have already run through the rapine of Verres, relative to the medimni of corn; and the statues of the temples of Sicily.

A-propos of the medimni of Verres; I have the honour to inform your majesty that the scheffel* of our extortioners daily lowers in price. I have informed every body that it is your majesty's intention to sell corn at twenty-two groschen of Brandenburg money, when you

* A measure of corn. T.

shall return to Potsdam, which obliges the monopolizers to lower their prices, that they may sell off their stock before your arrival.

M. de Catt has been very seriously ill of a colic, but is now entirely recovered, and I imagine will depart to-morrow to join your majesty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

From the King.

Dahlen, March 1, 1763.

PEACE at length is actually concluded, my dear marquis, and you will for once receive postillions with their flags, and their whole paraphernalia. God be praised, the end of my military labours is come. Do you ask me what I am doing? Here I am, daily hearing Cicero harangue; whose orations against Verres I have long ended, and am now reading his oration for Muræna; beside which, I have finished the *Batteux* *: thus you see I am not indolent.

* From the context, I imagine this to be the title of a book: or perhaps it is some work written by the king himself. T.

With respect to yourself, my dear marquis, do not be impatient; the river is now navigable, and you have time enough to transport your furniture to Potsdam before my arrival. I shall remain here, or at Torgau, till the 13th. My journey into Silesia will afford me employment for fifteen or seventeen days, so that I shall not be at Berlin before the 31st of this month, or the 2d of April; for I wish not to arrive on the 1st of the next month; the jokers would laugh at me, and call me April fool.

However pleasing peace may be to the people of Berlin, it is not the same to the Saxons. Scarcely do we quit the cities, and scarcely are they evacuated, before Saxon execution arrives.—“Pay, pay! Money for the king of Poland!” The people feel the inhumanity of this procedure: they are extremely poor; and, instead of affording them relief, their ruin is hastened. This, my dear D’Argens, is the picture of Saxony, painted from the life. For my part, I behold all these executions as an indifferent spectator; but, as a citizen of the world, I cannot approve them.

I proceed with my regulations for internal provincial government. The detail in gross of the army is finished.

The French have signed their peace five
2 days

days before us: you will allow we have not been long after them; and that it would be difficult to complete so great a work more gallantly than we have done. His Polish majesty is not yet cured; his health is uncertain. His return has been considered by the Saxons as a public calamity, a scourge more cruel than war and famine. But what are Saxony, its king, and ministry, to you and me? I aspire to tranquillity of mind, and to rid myself in some measure of business, that I may obtain leisure to reflect in private on my own passions; to shut myself up with my own mind, and to remove from all pomp, which, to own the truth, daily becomes more and more insupportable.

D'Alembert has refused all offers from Russia; I very much applaud this evident mark of disinterestedness, and think he has acted well in not exposing himself to vagabond fortune: but, *Basta*, this is too delicate a string to be touched.

Good night, my dear marquis; it is very late; I have a great number of affairs to expedite tomorrow; and hope, during my stay in Saxony, to receive some letters from you. Adieu, my dear D'Argens; live in content, take care of your health, and do not forget me.

L E T T E R CLXXXV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 5, 1763.

AT length I have seen this so much desired herald at arms passing under my windows, proclaiming peace, and followed by four or five thousand people, whose acclamations and joyful cries were to me more affecting than the most harmonious music. You are tenderly beloved by your people, and well deserve so to be: this cannot but be a double pleasure to your majesty.

While you are reading Cicero at Dahlen, I am here packing up his works. My effects have already been sent in part to Potsdam. I feel on this occasion the incumbrance of riches; nor did I imagine myself to be so wealthy. My goods cannot be conveyed in three boats; and, seeing so many packages and chests, I am tempted to believe that I have been one of your army commissaries.

I have another occupation beside that of removal; which is, I am preparing my equipage to go to meet you, on your return, with the citizens of Berlin. I have ordered a blue coat to

be laced with gold, which is the uniform that the bankers and tradesmen have assumed. These gentlemen treat gold and embroidery as trifles; and I must certainly do as they do, since they have kindly been pleased to admit me one of their company. I shall have the horse of good father Suarez, which is very gentle and peaceable, and worthy to carry an old philosopher; so that I run no risk.

I am not astonished at the act of D'Alembert, for I have often had the honour to remark to your majesty, I would rather be a good tradesman in the street *des freres* than emperor of Russia, which is a thought that I am daily more confirmed in.

I return your majesty many thanks for the horses, and will use them to your honour and glory.

Troops are daily coming in; and it is said that three battalions of Quintus Icilius will arrive tomorrow, which are to be disbanded, and incorporated with other regiments. I know not whether the queen of Hungary will disband her forces, but I am very certain she will diminish her kindred, and that the relationship of La Pompadour will be treated at Vienna as the free battalions will be at Berlin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Berlin, March 9, 1763.

I HAVE been in the utmost astonishment at receiving a letter from your holy bishop, who entreats me to lay another before your majesty. I at first thought of returning it to the bishop, but I afterward reflected that there might be something in its contents which your majesty would be glad to see; I therefore send you, along with that which I received, a copy of the letter I wrote to the bishop, which is as follows :

“ MY LORD,

“ I HAVE sent his majesty the letter which
 “ you did me the honour to inclose to me to
 “ be remitted to him, and wish it may produce
 “ every effect which you desire; and that his
 “ majesty, forgetful of the causes of discontent
 “ which he may have against you, will on this
 “ occasion remember nothing but that, having
 “ overcome his enemies, he has now, to crown
 “ his glory, only generously to pardon, as he
 “ has done already several times.

“ Concerning

“ Concerning what you have said to me,
 “ my lord, at the end of your letter, permit me
 “ to reply, I have never required or received
 “ from any person, to whom I have thought I
 “ could be of the least utility, any mark of gra-
 “ titude except that which should excite them
 “ faithfully to serve his majesty, and to afford
 “ proofs of indubitable zeal for the service of
 “ the best master, and the most respectable
 “ prince, on earth.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.”

I thought, sire, I should have had the honour to write some trifles to your majesty which might amuse you, but which I will write to-morrow, for we must not mingle the sacred with the profane. *Non sunt miscenda sacra profanis.* Your majesty perceives that I, like Algarotti, can cite Latin in my letters, and, what is more, gospel Latin.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXVII.

From the King.

Undated.

YOU travel, my dear marquis, by line and rule ; whereas I stroll the country, and run hither and thither, like our lady the lunatic. I can well imagine you have been at my house at Sans-Souci, and that you are returned ; but I will wager that a whole day was employed in this laborious work.

I shall not speak to you of my journeys, the end of which is twofold — war and finance, things concerning which you trouble yourself but little. I have on my way collected anecdotes of the journey of the Emperor, on our frontiers ; and I perceive, my dear D'Argens, that pictures appear more splendid when seen at a distance, than when closely examined. We princes ought not to exhibit ourselves but in all our glory, like the god of mafs. The golden vessel is displayed ; the people bow in adoration ; mafs is said, accompanied by harmonious instruments ; and the example of the multitude inspires a kind of dark and gloomy awe. Some fellow comes, examines the whole ceremony,
looks

looks into the chalice, and there finds some unleavened dough; then laughs at the superstition of the vulgar. Here, my dear marquis, is a moral fable for you, which you may turn to your own profit.

I have travelled to-day four miles in a carriage, and four on horseback, which has rather fatigued me; and I shall conclude my letter with the apothegm of king Dagobert, who was very fond of his dogs, and when he left them never failed to address them with—"The best friends must part."

Adieu, my dear marquis; I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

L E T T E R CLXXXVIII.

From the Marquis d'Argens:

S I R E,

Straßburg, October 9, 1764.

BEFORE I speak of my painful and melancholy journey, I must begin by excusing myself to your majesty, for a thoughtless act which I did not perceive I had been guilty of, till I reached Göttingen. I had carried from Berlin, in the bottom of my chest, two parcels of the Reflections on Charles XII. to deliver them

them to M. Catt. These parcels I forgot, and did not perceive they were in my chest till I was on my journey. I have delivered them to your majesty's resident at Frankfort, who has undertaken to remit them in all safety to your majesty.

I come now to my journey. The fatigue of the bad roads having apparently excited and overheated the bad juices which an excessively sedentary life had occasioned, I was taken with a kind of dysentery, which proceeded even to the voiding of blood. When I came to Göttingen, I was obliged to remain there nine days, that I might be enabled to continue my route. I never before was so well pleased with having written my last works in the taste of the gentlemen ending in *us**; for I have been attended to with the greatest care by the most able professors of the university, who most of them have visited me, and treated me in the politest manner possible. In fine, partly well, partly ill, they have rendered me capable of continuing my journey. Laugh hereafter at Greek if you can; for my part, I shall henceforth continually exclaim, Long live Greeks and professors!

From Göttingen I went to Cassel, where I

* Alluding to the Latin terminations with which the learned of Germany affect to write their names. T.

arrived

arrived in so weak a state that I had no inclination to see the landgrave, or his pictures. I thence, with great pain, proceeded to Frankfort, in a fever, and threatened with a return of the dysentery. I wished to have hired an apartment in that city, to rest myself for a few days : but your resident informed me I should fail in my respect to your majesty by so doing ; because the magistrates oblige the citizens who lodge Prussians to ask their permission, a manner in which they do not act with any other nation. He added that I must either remain at the inn or depart. I took my measures accordingly ; for my nine days residence at an inn at Göttingen had cost me a hundred and fifty crowns, having with me seven persons, including three servants.

In fine, sire, I arrived at Strasburg half dead ; and, after having been here four days, this is the first in which I have found strength enough to have the honour to write to you. I intend to continue here a week longer, that I may be a little recovered, I have not above thirty miles to travel post ; after which I shall proceed by water, on the Saone, to Lyons, and on the Rhone from Lyons to Arles, where I shall be within four miles of Aix,

I am well determined, on my return, not to:
travel

travel a hundred miles by land, from Strasburg to Berlin, but to go by water as far as Auffone, which is sixty leagues from Strasburg. From Strasburg I mean to descend the Rhine as far as Holland, where I intend to embark for Hamburg; to which, in fine weather, it is no more than two days sail. You will tell me I may be drowned; to this I shall answer that all those who go from Hamburg to England and Holland are not drowned.

Your majesty will say, when you read my letter, you predicted every thing that has happened. I allow the truth of the assertion; but, were the journey again to make, I would again make it, because it was absolutely necessary. It was my duty both to secure a provision and a home for the marchioness d'Argens, after my death; which age, and my weak state of health, seemed to speak at no great distance.

To weary your majesty with this detail of sickness and bad roads is too much.

I learned at Göttingen that most of the old ministers, counsellors, &c. of Hanover, who had been protected by the late king, have demanded their dismissal, and have retired. My lord Bute governs the electorate, the inhabitants of which join the English in their exclamations against him.

When

When I came to Strasburg, I found what I imagined could not but have happened, that is to say, I found your majesty universally admired. Without the least flattery, there is but one voice on this subject; and people of sense have informed me that I should find the same opinion through all France, of which I did not entertain a moment's doubt.

There are two very fine German regiments here, and the remainder of the garrison appears to me very passable. I sometimes see the guard file off from my window, and no longer recognize the discipline of my own times, or the same manner of clothing and treating the men. Should France happen, for some space of time, to have ministers of the war department who should be military men, and should constables in petticoats * no longer be made, a thing which may happen to-morrow, the troops would be greatly benefited.

The body of marshal Saxe still continues between four or five deal boards, which form a wretched case in which his coffin is inclosed. I very much fear he will long continue to be thus

* *Gonille*. I do not know, nor can I find, any such word; I have only imagined it came from the Italian word *gonella*, or *petticoat*. The word *gonelle* is used in French to signify a hunting dress for men or women. T.

vilely lodged, and that the mausoleum which had been intended for him will have the fate of that intended for cardinal de Fleury.

The Jesuits here are very gay and tranquil, as they are throughout the province of Lorrain. Hence it will follow that, from these two provinces, they will some day overrun France again, and, like wild beasts rushing from their dens, will pitilessly rend those by whom they have been persecuted. I shall not see this event; but your majesty, who is yet young, will be a witness of it. It must be owned that, in all this affair of the Jesuits, there has been much inconsistency.

Should your majesty do me the favour to answer me, I entreat you to address your letter—
 “To my chamberlain, the marquis d’Argens, at
 “Aix in Provence.”

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CLXXXIX.

From the Marquis d’Argens.

S I R E,

Eguilles, December 2, 1764.

I CANNOT express to your majesty the pleasure and consolation that I received from
 the

the letter with which you have honoured me, and which I found at Aix. I had great need of something that might dissipate my gloom. I had heard at Lyons that my brother D'Eguilles was gone to Paris to attend to a law suit, which was the result of that he had carried on against his parliament. By way of parenthesis, it was very fortunate that the king had annulled the sentence of the parliament of Provence; for by that he was condemned to lose his office of president, which was confiscated in favour of the king, and to be banished the kingdom for ten years. This would have retarded the conclusion of my business.

In fine, D'Eguilles has obtained every thing he asked from the council: he is continued in his place; the king has only commanded him not to go to Aix, till he shall grant him permission. He is come to Eguilles, which is but a league distant from that city; and I am with him and my mother.

My affairs are terminated to my satisfaction. The arrangement I have to make, relative to an estate which is ceded to me, will not detain me longer than the month of April. As I therefore estimate, I shall have the happiness to throw myself at your feet at the beginning of summer; should I not before that time depart,
and

and make my reverence to the Eternal Father. To own the truth, I should willingly give the preference on this subject to your majesty.

I am very desirous of executing the commands you gave me, and to get rid of every disease with which I am afflicted. I communicated your will to my physician, who advised me to request you would have the goodness to command that, instead of sixty-one, I should not be more than fifty years of age, at most; and that you would send me, from the next Leipzig fair, a new stomach, in excellent condition; because the secret of bestowing such kind of goods on old people, who scarcely can digest any food, is unknown in Provence.

I think, sire, it is almost as condemnable to mock at the sufferings of a poor philosopher, of sixty-one, as it would be for me to reproach an old soldier with the wounds he has received. Do you imagine a man may study forty years without greatly injuring his health? You will reply, "I have been studying thirty years, I govern a great kingdom, I command my own armies, and I undertake wars as difficult as they are glorious, yet I am notwithstanding in good health." Since the days of Julius Cæsar and Marcus Aurelius, one man has appeared in Europe, who, equalling the glory of the first emperor,

peror, and the wisdom of the second, has notwithstanding digested well, therefore all philosophers ought to have a good digestion. This is not conclusive reasoning ; it sins against every law of logic ; you therefore have no right to pretend I ought to be in good health, because you have undergone more fatigues in one day than I have in ten years.

Really, fire, I am much vexed that the sole thing, concerning which you have not reasoned consistently, should be my health. Would to God that you were as great a physician as you are a king ; I should long since have possessed the strength of Hercules ; you would have added this benefit to the various others with which you have loaded me, and the remembrance of which I shall maintain beyond the grave ; that is if our souls remember, after death, what happened to their bodies during life. Forgive this short mark of scepticism, coming from a country where the catholic faith reigns so powerfully that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. I occasionally entertain doubts, the solution to which I will request from you, in the philosophic palace of Sans-Souci.

The son of Gregory, one of our good Berlin merchants, is at Marseilles with the richest bankers of that city. He has promised to come

and see me at Eguilles, before his departure, which is not very distant. I shall do myself the honour to remit a letter, by his favour, to your majesty, which shall be written with more common sense than the present; and shall prove, first, that a Provençal sun has not put a brain, that had been tempered by the cold climates of the north, into a state of absolute fermentation.

The court has just published an ordinance, by which the seminaries of the Jesuits, in the provinces of Alsatia, Franche Comté, Hainault, and Flanders, where they had been preserved, are now destroyed. Yet the Jesuits are permitted, after having left the kingdom, to return, and live there without an oath of allegiance. Your majesty knows Racine by rote: permit me to cite the following passage in this place :

——— *Que d'un cœur incertain,
Je parerai d'un bras les coups de l'autre main* *.

What, first, are your Jesuits doing in Silesia? They eat, drink, and sleep in peace. Your gospel ministers, whom we catholics call preachers, do the same. The Rabbins of the synagogue, among whom is my Hebrew master, M. Ra-

* With heart uncertain, I ward with one arm the blows the other gives.

phael, peaceably enjoy a similar privilege. Sage Frederic! Philosophic king! under whose government men think differently, yet do not dispute, may I once again see you before I die! This is my only hope.

In the mean time, if you have any pity on a poor exile, banished the land of philosophy, deign to console him, till he shall return to Sans-Souci, by honouring him with your answer.

Among your numerous French surgeons, should you by chance have a vacant place, I have met with one of the most able men in France, who would be delighted to go into a country which is now become the country of all men of merit.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXC:

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Avignon, September 10, 1765.

YOUR majesty will think it strange that I have not done myself the honour to write to you since the last letter you had the goodness to

H h 2

send

send me. I was on the road to Berlin when I received it, and I supposed I should soon have had the satisfaction to throw myself at your feet, when I was attacked, five days after my departure, by an inflammatory fever, which has remained with me near two months. I was in a small town of Dauphiné, called Montelimart. At length nature, rather than the knowledge of the physician who attended me, gave me relief, and restored me strength, sufficient to be carried on a litter to a covered boat, in which, descending the Rhone, I was brought to Avignon. I supposed I could regain Provence and return home, there to find the necessary aid for the recovery of my health; but it was impossible for me to proceed, because my journey must have been by land; for this I was too weak, and too much incommoded by the diarrhea that succeeded to the fever, after the latter had left me. I therefore remained at Avignon, where I very fortunately met with an excellent and very celebrated physician, who repaired the mistakes of his predecessor, and afforded me relief.

I am, notwithstanding, exceedingly weak still, and unable to go abroad; my legs continue to be much swelled; for, by the administration of bark, and other remedies, that had been given me by the first physician, to free me from the fever,

fever, he had brought on the beginning of a dropſy, from which, however, I have nothing at preſent to fear.

This, ſir, is what has prevented me from the performance of my duty, and from writing to your majeſty. Though I flatter myſelf you know my probity, and uprightneſs, ſufficiently not to imagine I endeavour to impoſe upon you, in order to juſtify my delay in returning to Potsdam, yet, ſir, for my own ſatisfaction, and to calm the fears I entertain of diſpleaſing your majeſty, I have the honour to ſend you the certificate of the phyſician, to whom I am indebted for my life. He is a man famous for his art, an amiable philoſopher, and an old friend of the lord marſhal, to whom he has written reſpecting me. I have cauſed the ſaid certificate to be proved before the firſt magiſtrates of the city; for the only thing which can at preſent impede the entire recovery of my health is, the apprehenſion that your majeſty ſhould think me capable of ſeeking for vain pretexts, to prolong my abſence. By the certificate which I ſend you, it will be ſeen that I cannot begin my journey in leſs than ſix weeks, and that I muſt likewiſe travel very ſlowly. The weather will then be very ſevere, eſpecially about the middle of my journey.

If your majeſty will grant me permiſſion to

remain here till the first of March, I shall then arrive at Potsdam about the middle of April; and I shall perform the journey with the greater ease, because my brother, who commands the regiment of *royal-vaisseau*, and whose regiment is in garrison at Maubeuge in Flanders, will accompany me as far as Brussels, and even to Wesel; being now in Provence, on his half yearly furlough, and intending to return to his regiment in the month of March.

I most earnestly entreat your majesty not to be offended at any thing I have proposed; you have but to command, and let my state of health be what it will, should you wish it, I will depart on the receipt of your letter, if you deign to honour me with one, or according to the orders which you shall send me. If you think proper to honour me with an answer, let me request you to send your letter by way of M. Schutz, banker, at Berlin, from whom it will be remitted from banker to banker, without my address being written on it; because, should my name be seen, there is danger of its being detained at the post-office of Paris. The last letter, with which it pleased your majesty to honour me, was sent by way of Messieurs Girard and Michelet, and was safely delivered to M. Mettra at Paris; but the latter having directed it
immediately

immediately to me from Paris, it was three months detained, and I did not receive it till I had been four days on my route toward Berlin. It was sent after me from Aix, at which place it had but just arrived.

I shall not pass through Paris, fire; for what could I do in this city, where the minds of the people are in a greater degree of agitation than that which disturbs the brains of the news-writers?

I am informed, fire, that D'Alembert has just written a work, which will one day raise up many enemies against him. I should not be sorry, should he be persecuted, provided persecution should bring him to Potsdam. I have been assured that he was in danger of death, at the time when I myself was very ill. We should have been both exceedingly surprised so suddenly to have met in the residence of the great Beelzebub, who keeps men like Trajan and Plato under his gripe.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

January 1, 1766.

PERMIT me at the beginning of the year to wish the accomplishment of all your majesty's desires. I imagine, sire, I can make no wish, the fulfilling of which will be more advantageous than that of praying Heaven to grant your health may be as good as your glory is great; that your majesty may have the strength of Hercules, having already acquired his immortality; for I have the honour to know your majesty too well to suppose you have any inclination to martyr yourself, in this world, that you may be immortal, in the next.

I had the honour to write to your majesty after the fit of sickness which had brought me to death's door, and had obliged me to stop at Montelimart in Dauphiné, and afterward to cause myself to be carried to Avignon, where I was obliged to remain six weeks. I am at present in good health, and will depart on the first of March, that I may arrive at Potsdam as soon as possible, where I expect to be toward the fifteenth of April.

Your majesty not having done me the honour
to

to acquaint me with your commands, after I took the liberty to write to you from Avignon, I fear lest you should be offended with me; but I entreat you to consider that no efforts of the will can counteract superior force. M. Catt has informed me that your majesty thought my having sent certificates a useless act. I could have wished, had the thing been possible, to have sent you the pope's vice-legate in a letter, and all the apostolic protonotaries who are at Avignon; for there is nothing I dread so much as to fail, in the least, in the respect which I owe to your majesty's commands; but, in fine, sire, permit me once more to repeat, we are none of us bound to act impossibilities; and I am too well acquainted with your majesty's justice, to doubt you would impute that as negligence to me which does not depend on myself.

The news I have heard in my solitude is, that the health of the Dauphin continues in a deplorable condition. His loss will throw two-thirds of the kingdom into a state of consternation. The remainder will rejoice in their hearts without appearing so to do; for this remainder consists of the Jansenists, of whom he was the avowed enemy.

D'Alembert has been burrowing into the affairs of the Jesuits and Jansenists, and has

written

written a work on the fall of the Jesuits; in which he sometimes justifies and often condemns them. In this same work the Jansenists are treated without mercy, and much more so than the Jesuits; for which reason all these people, opposite as they are to each other, have united in attacking D'Alembert. They have enquired into his birth, they have criticised his actions, and, in fine, they have filled France with libels, in which he is treated without pity. However philosophic we may be, such things displease, especially when philosophy is not entirely stripped of self-love. The sage ceases to be a sage, when he interferes in the quarrels of priests and monks. It is necessary to be as thoughtless and as petulant as the French in general are, to enter into such disputes. Corneille has said of the Romans,

*Romains contre Romains, parens contre parens,
Combattre follement pour le choix des tyrans*.*

We may say with more truth of the French,

*Français contre Français, parens contre parens,
Combattre follement pour le choix des pedans†.*

I have written to D'Alembert, and have not

* Romans with Romans, and kindred with kindred, madly combat for the choice of tyrants.

† Frenchmen with Frenchmen, and kindred with kindred, madly combat for the choice of pedants.

failed

failed to quote the passage from Moliere, *Que diable alloit il faire dans cette galere**?

I must own, sire, beside the great obligations I owe your majesty, I am indebted for others of a very essential nature to the Germans. By living among them did I learn to cast off that turbulent spirit which seems inseparable from the genius of a Frenchman. What connection is there between philosophy and the bull Unigenitus; or of what importance to the disciple of Bayle or Gassendi is the state of the Jansenists or the Molinists? What ought we to say of a wise man, or one who wishes to be thought wise, who troubles himself concerning the distinctions to be observed between madmen, in their lunatic hospital? Jansenists, Jesuits, Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists, and Quakers, are, to the philosopher, all madmen.

I have received a letter, some days since, from Voltaire, who has sent me his works, and who has been kind enough to tell me that, as I passed through Lyons, it would be shameful for brother Isaac not to come and visit brother Voltaire; and that, in imitation of the hermits Anthony and Paul, he wishes to receive my benediction before he dies. But I shall not pass

* What the devil had I to do on shipboard?

through Geneva, unless I receive an express permission from your majesty so to do; nor can all the hermits and fathers of the desert prevail over me, unless I have your majesty's orders.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Eguilles, January 4, 1766.

SOME days since I had the honour to write to your majesty, that I might enjoy the pleasure of wishing you a happy new year, undisturbed in mind, and unafflicted in body. Should a grammarian ever comment on my letter, he would say that, when we write to a philosophic king, what is understood by "undisturbed in mind" is "undisturbed by the intrigues of foreign courts;" because all accidents which depend on the sage can never give him any disturbance; but that all the wisdom of the world is ineffectual in opposition to accidents occasioned by folly: therefore to wish an undisturbed mind to such a king, is to wish that good sense may this year reign in every court of Europe. Amen. So be it.

That

That of France has just lost a great prince, who loved the people, and would have rendered them happy, had their happiness ever depended on him. He not only died like a saint, which, to us philosophers, is an affair of small consequence, but with the fortitude of a hero. A few moments before his death, he sent for his three children. To the duke de Berry, who is hereafter to ascend the throne, he said the most noble and affecting things. I believe the Jansenists will gain much less by his death than they hoped. The king, in three months, has totally destroyed two parliaments; that of Pau, and that of Rennes : criminal actions have been preferred against seven members of the latter, who have been so licentious in their conduct as to write the most insolent anonymous letters to the king. One of these criminals was audacious enough to say, as he was passing the place in which the equestrian statue of the king is erected, in presence of several persons who surrounded him——“ Gentlemen, we defend our rights against this statue !”

The clemency that has been observed, during ten years, relative to all the insults which people of low rank, dignified with places which they had purchased, daily made to majesty and the royal authority, had emboldened them entirely to cast
away

away decorum. The parliament of Thoulouse had issued a decree against the duke de Fitz-James, governor of Languedoc, ordering him to be taken into custody; that of Rouen had annulled two edicts of the king's council, and forbidden them to be carried into execution under pain of death. These tie-wig gentry imagine themselves people of importance; they have just been taught, at their own expence, that the king has no need of any other means but his own will to effect their annihilation.

Has your majesty seen the new edition of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique** of Voltaire? He has cited me, in the preface, as the author of the article *Genesis*. He had been searching in my *Timæus*, for what I had said on Moses and the Pentateuch, to which he has added seven or eight good impieties. He was induced to play me this trick, because his book had been ranked with the eternally anathematized, by the assembly of the clergy; and, to diminish the scandal of this condemnation, he has, in this new edition, inserted the names of several persons, who, he says, have sent him the principal articles of his Dictionary. The man will die as he has lived.

I have just received four copies of his Dictionary, which he has sent me as a present. I can-

* The Philosophic Dictionary.

not deny that the chief things in his article Genesis are written by me, for they are extracted from my notes on Timæus: but I sent him none of them; and still less did I write four or five very pleasant impieties, which, however are very capable of exciting the clamours of the fanatics. Should your majesty not meet with a copy of this book at Berlin, I will do myself the honour to deliver one, on my arrival; for you will certainly have this copy as soon as any one for which you could send, I being firmly resolved to depart at the end of the month of February, the weather being already tolerably fine.

I again earnestly entreat your majesty would not be offended at my not having arrived at the beginning of the winter; for, however great my wish so to arrive, the thing was impossible; and, after a severe illness by which I was afflicted, I was too weak to be able to undertake so long a journey, during the severe weather of winter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCIH.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R È,

Eguilles, March 20, 1766.

I SHALL have the honour to throw myself at your majesty's feet before the end of the month of April. In three days I shall leave this place, and immediately proceed to Strasburg. I have hired a carriage, and, what is more, paid for it, as far as Besançon. I shall perform the journey in a good coach, without travelling post; for, to speak the truth, I have found that, in order to go the faster, I must submit to the necessity of proceeding by such stages as I have agreed should be made, with the coachman with whom I have bargained to drive me. This is a certain means which I have discovered, to preserve me from the attacks and temptations of indolence. With respect to illness, I have paid so much attention to my health, and have been so careful of my stomach,

*Que je défie bien toux, fièvre, apoplexie,**De pouvoir à cent ans attenter à ma vie *.*

From Lyons to Berlin I shall travel in company with M. Stosch, who informs me he has

* That I defy cough, fever, and apoplexy, for these hundred years, to deprive me of life.

fold your majesty a magnificent collection of pictures and curiosities. He has three times been to visit me here at Eguilles, and is waiting for me at Lyons, where he has some business by which he is necessarily detained. I find your majesty continues to enrich your palaces, and especially that of Sans-Souci, by the precious relics of antiquity; the least of which are of greater worth than all those possessed by the church of Magdeburg; I do not even except the Virgin's slipper.

I shall have many things to tell your majesty of what is passing in this country. The king has at length discovered that men proper only to sit in judgment on a law-suit assume the right of being his equals. He has punished them, and reduced them to their just level. Never were the parliaments under Louis XIV. so humbled. All people of sense are delighted. These pretended defenders of the people become by their haughtiness insupportable to the people themselves. I was never better convinced how necessary it is that a king should be absolute, than since I have been in France. All the middle ranks, between the people and the king, are but so many petty tyrants, who equally fail in their duty to their master and their fellow citizens. In vain is it said that, under a bad

VOL. X. I i king,

king, those persons who balance his power are very useful. To this I answer, I have no doubt that the people were infinitely more happy under Louis XI. than in England under the reign of the house of Stuart, to whose power there was so great a counterpoise. Your majesty will be astonished to find me become so much an anti-parliamentarian; the reason is in my having learned, during a residence of five-and-twenty years at Berlin, the good that results from having only one master who knows the art of making himself obeyed; and that I never was better convinced of the reality of this good than since I have seen what is passing in France.

While I have been here, I have endeavoured to search into the reasons and causes of many things; and I have attained my wishes. It would really, sire, have been a pity had I died at Avignon, for I have laid in good store of provisions for our philosophic suppers at Sans-Souci. While growing old, I have been collecting what may well supply the loss of imagination, and the decline of wit; and I have furnished my memory with thirty tales, to recompense my soul for the heaviness which she daily feels increase, and her small remaining share of vivacity. Any other person would regret having lost the little imagination which Nature had bestowed,

bestowed, and would dread to appear stripped of the quality which gives most pleasure in the world; but I know your majesty will not curse the fig-tree for bearing nothing but leaves, in a season when it cannot bear fruit. This, sire, is my comfort.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potsdam, December 14, 1767.

I HAVE the honour to send your majesty Verses which are sold as mine at Potsdam and Berlin. I wish I had written them, for they are excellent, worthy of Voltaire, or of you; and, had you not yourself been praised in them, I should have imagined you were the author; for I am acquainted with no person in this country capable of writing any so good; should you not be of the same opinion, I should then say—"In vain does a minister league against the Cid."

Vers au Roi de Prusse.

*La mère de la mort, la vieilleffe tremblante,
A de ses bras d'airain courbé mon faible corps,
Et des maux, qu'elle entraîne une suite effrayante,
De mon ame immortelle attaque les ressorts.*

*Je brave tes assauts, redoutable vieillesse ;
 Je vis auprès d'un sage, et je ne te crains pas ;
 Il te prêtera plus d'appas
 Que le plaisir trompeur n'en donne à la jeunesse.
 Coulez, mes derniers jours, sans trouble et sans terreur ;
 Coulez près d'un héros dont le mâle génie
 Vous fait goûter en paix le songe de la vie.
 Et dépouille la mort de ce qu'elle a d'horreur.
 Ma raison, qu'il éclaire, en est plus intrépide ;
 Mes pas, par lui guidés, en sont plus affermis :
 Tout mortel que Pallas couvre de son égide,
 Ne craint pas les Dieux ennemis.
 Philosophe des rois, que ma carrière est belle !
 J'irai de ce palais, par un chemin de fleurs,
 Aux champs élyséens, parler à Marc-Aurèle
 Du plus grand de ses successeurs ;
 A Salluste jaloux je lirai votre histoire,
 A Lycurgue vos lois, à Virgile vos vers :
 Je surprendrai les morts, ils ne pourront m'en croire ;
 Nul d'eux n'a rassemblé tant de talens divers.
 Mais lorsque j'aurai vu les ombres immortelles,
 N'allez pas après moi confirmer mes récits ;
 Vivez, rendez heureux ceux qui vous sont soumis,
 Et n'allez que bien tard rejoindre vos modèles.*

Le Marquis d'Argens *.

The

* *Verses to the King of Prussia.*

Trembling age, the mother of death, with iron arm has
 bent my feeble body ; and its fearful train of ills attacks the
 elastic powers of my immortal soul. Formidable age, I
 brave thy assaults ; I live with a sage, and I fear thee not ; for he
 will afford age itself more delight than ever is felt in the de-
 lightful pleasures of youth. Pass on, old Time, without vex-
 ation

The poet, fire, who has signed these lines with my name, has certainly done me much honour; though he is very much deceived, however great an admirer I may be of your majesty's glory, should he believe I am in any haste to go and converse with Marcus Aurelius; there are others enough, who on those fatal shores may acquit themselves of so splendid an embassy.

A-propos, fire, of death: as it is the natural condition of man to be subject to rheumatism, spasm, and fever, and since no one better fulfils these functions than I do, if, by chance, taking care of my health, I should, contrary to the order of things, be tolerably well, is it your

ation or terror; pass in presence of a hero, whose bold genius gives me to enjoy the dream of life in peace, and strips death of all its horrors. By him enlightened, my reason becomes more intrepid; guided by him, my steps less staggering. The mortal whom Pallas protects with her ægis fears not the inimical gods. Oh philosophic king! how pleasant is my route! From this palace shall I depart by flower-strewn paths to elysian fields; there with Marcus Aurelius to converse of the greatest of his successors. To Sallust will I read your history, your laws to Lycurgus, and to Virgil your verse. The envious dead will stand astonished, unable to believe; not one of them possessed talents so various. But having seen these immortal shades, come not to confirm my recital. Live, and render all beneath you happy. Let it be late before you join the heroes who have been your guides.

The marquis d'Argens,

majesty's pleasure that I should go to Berlin? I entreat you would send your commands on this subject by M. de Catt, that in this case I may take an additional supply of drops, and some few packets of powders, in violation of all the laws of this best of possible worlds, in which it is necessary we should always be in affliction. I should not murmur against these laws, could I but write verses equal to those which I have the honour to send your majesty, and which I would rather have composed than all those which are, have been, or shall be written, by the good chevalier D'Ora.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER CXCIV.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Potsdam, January 5, 1768.

YOUR eulogium on prince Henry thawed me for half an hour, and your eloquence produced on my body that which the hottest stove has not been able to effect for these three weeks. You have the fire of Demosthenes, the noble vehemence of Bourdaloue; and this, when-

ever you think proper, you temper by the ease of Flechier.

Why have you twice repeated, in one page, a phrase that expresses the same thought in the same words?

The phrase is this—"A child that has left
"no trace of its existence."—Had you not committed this slight inadvertency, you would have performed what is not the lot of mortal to perform, you would have written a faultless work. The pages 8 and 9 of your Discourse are of more worth than the Dictionary of Suidas; and I would rather have written page 20 than all the books of Scaliger. With respect to page 27, it is superior to any praise of mine. To Bourdaloue, Patru, and the other great masters of the art, do I leave its eulogium.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCVI.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

S I R E,

Potsdam, February 5, 1768.

AMONG the sufferings the enumeration of which your majesty has made, in the verses which you have done me the honour to send,

I i 4

you

you have forgotten the tooth-ach, which precisely was the pain that prevented me from returning thanks to your majesty sooner for your epistle, which is excellent. I have read it twice, and have continually admired with what art your majesty can paint the most simple things, and the truth of colouring with which you render them valuable. The description of the purple fever is admirable; nor can circumstances, which at first appear so common, be more nobly expressed. The side blow which you give the bigots made me laugh heartily, on one side of my mouth; for my tooth prevented me from moving the other.

In fine, sire, whatever spleen your majesty may attribute to me, I thought your work charming; nor have I thought myself ill-treated except in the epithet crafty, which you bestow on me. Had you placed this word at the end of a line, I should have said nothing, because I know the want of a rhyme sometimes hurries away the best poets; but to call me crafty in the middle of a verse, is truly no christian act.

Continue, sire, to write good works, were you even to write against all my diseases; while I will continue to take my diet drink to relieve my lungs, which are little better than

those that Maupertuis moistened with Barbadoes water, which water presently brought him to perfect maturity.

With respect to myself, I wish to remain unripe a few years longer, if possible; because I have not finished the compilation of all the passages I want, in order to compose some dozen volumes in folio, which may be of great use to posterity, for all persons who shall happen to be troubled with a diarrhæa.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R CXCVII.

From the Marquis d'Argens.

SIRE,

Berlin, Sunday morning;
written with much coughing.

IN answer to the questions which your majesty has done me the honour to propose, I will speak with the impartiality of a Jew, who has no predilection for Geneva or Rome, and who with the same eye beholds a Socinian and a Catholic.

1. The divine nature of the Son of God was not an article of faith in the three first centuries. Jesus was then only supposed to be a creature infinitely more perfect than others, but yet
much

much inferior to God the Father, who was only, thus to speak, the father of Jesus by adoption.

This we clearly see from the testimony of the greatest fathers of the church, who lived before the council of Nice. Origen, who was born about the year 185, and who flourished in the third century, says, in his work against Celsus, that there were only in his time some among the vulgar who believed the Son to be equal to the Father, and like him a god; but that these were ignorant people. The catholic doctors at present endeavour to justify Origen, and torture certain passages in his works; but this pitiable conduct can only deceive such people as are unacquainted with the writings of the father. St. Jerome acted more openly than the modern theologians; for he unequivocally accuses Origen of having affirmed that the Son, compared with the Father, was but a feeble light; that he was not the truth, but the type of the truth; that he was visible, and the Father invisible. The famous Huet, bishop of Avranches, has in these latter ages allowed that Origen had very clearly said, the Son, in comparison with the Father, was not goodness itself, but the image of goodness.

This was the doctrine of the fathers who had preceded Origen. None of them had supposed
Jesus

Jesus the equal of his Father. St. Justin, who lived about the year 150, says, in his Dialogue, pages 356 and 357, that the Father is invisible, the Son visible, and that the grandeur of the Son does not approach to that of the Father.

Were I inclined, I might here insert the authorities of ten other fathers of the church; but I refer the curious on this subject to a work of father Petau *. In the eighth chapter of the first book, they will see that author has established three points. The first is, that the doctrine condemned by the council of Nice, in the person of Arius, was not peculiar to him, but that it had been common to many writers, who were his predecessors; the second, that the dogma of the divinity of the Son of God was not established, nor explained, before the council of Nice; and the third, that Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, did but complain from exaggeration, in his letter mentioned by Theodoret, that Arius had invented a new dogma, which no one had ever taught before.

What more can be demanded than a confession like this from a catholic divine, who was himself a Jesuit? I allow father Petau was afterward very angry for having made this confession. His first purpose was but simply to

* Intituled *Petavii Dogmata Theologica*.

give a picture of the doctrine of the first ages, and he did not disguise the opinions of the fathers : but he soon perceived this was to teach the public a thing of which they ought to remain ignorant ; and he was exclaimed against, not only in France, but even in England, where several protestant divines ill-treated him in their writings. He then composed a preface, purposely to destroy that which he had before established. He changed from white to black, and sacrificed the fame of a good critic to that of an orthodox divine. He did penance to the fathers, and uttered a thousand puerilities to prove their orthodoxy relative to the Trinity.

2. At the council of Nice it was that the Holy Ghost was declared the third person of the Trinity.

3. There is no general council in which the infallibility of the **pope** was established ; on the contrary, general councils have sometimes deposed popes. The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope is only *publicly* maintained by the theologians of the other side of the Alps, and whispered in France by the Jesuits.

4. The silly doctrine of transubstantiation began to be acknowledged in the divinity schools of the eleventh century, and was confirmed by the council of Trent, on account of

its having been rejected by Luther and Calvin as a ridiculous novelty.

5. The dogma of purgatory is of more ancient date than that of transubstantiation. Some slight traces of it are discovered in the writers of the sixth and seventh centuries. It was entirely admitted in the eighth, the monks having discovered in this doctrine a source of immense wealth.

6. The marriages of priests were not abolished in the third century; before which time, there had been councils that endeavoured to defend them; among others those of Elvira, Toledo, Valentia, and Arles; but the canons of these councils were only executed feebly; and we find in catholic authors—for the assertions of protestants might be suspected on this subject—we find, I say, a million of proofs of the marriages of priests and of bishops down to the thirteenth century.

Giraldus Cambrensis, who lived in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, says in the treatise *de Laudibus Walliæ*, inserted in the *Anglia Sacra*, page 450, that the bishops married in Wales.

St. Bernard, who lived in the twelfth century, and whose testimony I do not believe the catholics refuse, says, in speaking of Malachi,
his

his contemporary and his friend, whose life he wrote, that the eight prelates who had governed the church of Celsus, to which bishopric Malachi had succeeded, had all been married.

In the History of Normandy by the sieur de Maffeville, a catholic author, who has not been dead thirty years, we find that Robert, the son of Richard duke of Normandy, being archbishop of Rouen, married a lady of quality, by whom he had children, to whom he bequeathed the wealth of the church. We read in the first volumes of the *Journaux des Sçavans*, that the bishop of Normandy having endeavoured, toward the close of the eleventh century, in a council, to abolish the marriages of priests, which were very frequent in those times, they took up stones to stone him.

In the Grecian church the priests have always married, and continue to marry.

With respect to the Virgin Mary, there has been no council, though there have been many divines who wished to make her *a fourth* person of *the Trinity*, as may be seen at length in Bayle, by searching the table of contents under the word *Vierge* (Virgin): I have not at present a good edition of this author's Dictionary, where this subject is stated, nor can I here insert the words of these divines.

Such

Such are the explanations I send, in obedience to what your majesty did me the honour to ask. I have dwelt most on the first, because I think clear proofs are necessary, when we wish to advance a system which overthrows all received opinions, and which attempts no less than to demonstrate that the Deity whom we adore was not thought to be a god, by those who transmitted their religion to us, and whom we consider as the fathers of this religion. A simple assertion is not enough for a fact of such importance.

May Heaven grant your majesty the length of days of Methuselah, the power of David, and the riches of Solomon ; for, with respect to wisdom, you have a better dose of it than he had : and concubines will never induce you to offer incense to St. Ignatius and to St. Christopher, as they induced this so much vaunted king of Israel to offer to Baal, and to idols.

I am, with profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R

WRITTEN BY THE

MARCHIONES D'ARGENS

TO

FREDERIC II.

SIRE,

Eguilles near Aix, March 19, 1771.

FOR these two months past, since the loss of my husband, I have been continually excited to assert on all occasions, that he expired like a saint; when the truth requires I should simply say he expired like a sage. They have taken advantage of my grief to blind my reason, fire, which was so far gone that I was obliged to do violence to myself to obey your majesty's commands, which required me to relate the truth. This I have faithfully performed, but I fear lest I should have weakened the picture, by a mixture of colours foreign to the subject. The flambeau which enlightened me so well, I have lost. From the light of your precious letter,

letter, fire, have I recovered that fortitude which till then had forsaken me. Permit me to repair the wrong which expressions too cautious may have led me to commit toward the memory of my husband.

Of him, fire, I may say, with the splendor which truth demands, what your majesty said of general Goltz. Cato did not die with more fortitude, speaking like Lucretius. His only alarm related to the arrival of his brother, of whom he was in expectation, that he might make his last arrangements with him; the vain terrors of another life he despised: in fine, he died like a true philosopher.

I had the honour to inform your majesty that he entertained himself during his sickness with the works of the most illustrious philosophers. The abbé, as a man of the church, often wished to dispute his principles; but politeness prevented him from being too obstinate in discussion against a man much enfeebled; and for this reason, the abbé submitted to discourse which to him appeared but little orthodox.

I wrote to your majesty that the fear of the effect which might have been produced on my husband, by such notice as should lead him to think of death, was one of the motives which I alleged to prevent the abbé from approaching

his bed; but my husband was not ignorant that his end was near, for he mentioned it to me daily. I did but employ every means in my power to prevent him from being wearied by such kind of conversation. When I left him, he was unable to see, speak, or hear.

Your majesty must not be astonished that the abbé, who was present when he departed, should be there at the precise moment. He is a friend of the marquis's brother's, who lodged with the baroness on his way to Toulon, where he remained some weeks after we had departed. He watched this melancholy moment. What a country, fire, is this! They told me, when the last remedy was administered to my dear marquis, that it was necessary to lower the vapours of his mind, and to save the soul though at the expence of the body. What a barbarous system! But I had been determined by a hope more humane, and from this remedy waited his return to life.

I humbly ask pardon for having again importuned your majesty. Ridiculous scruples occasioned me to speak truth by halves in my first letter, and scruples better founded have dictated this second, in which I thought it my duty to obey your majesty more truly, and to render to my husband that justice which is his due.

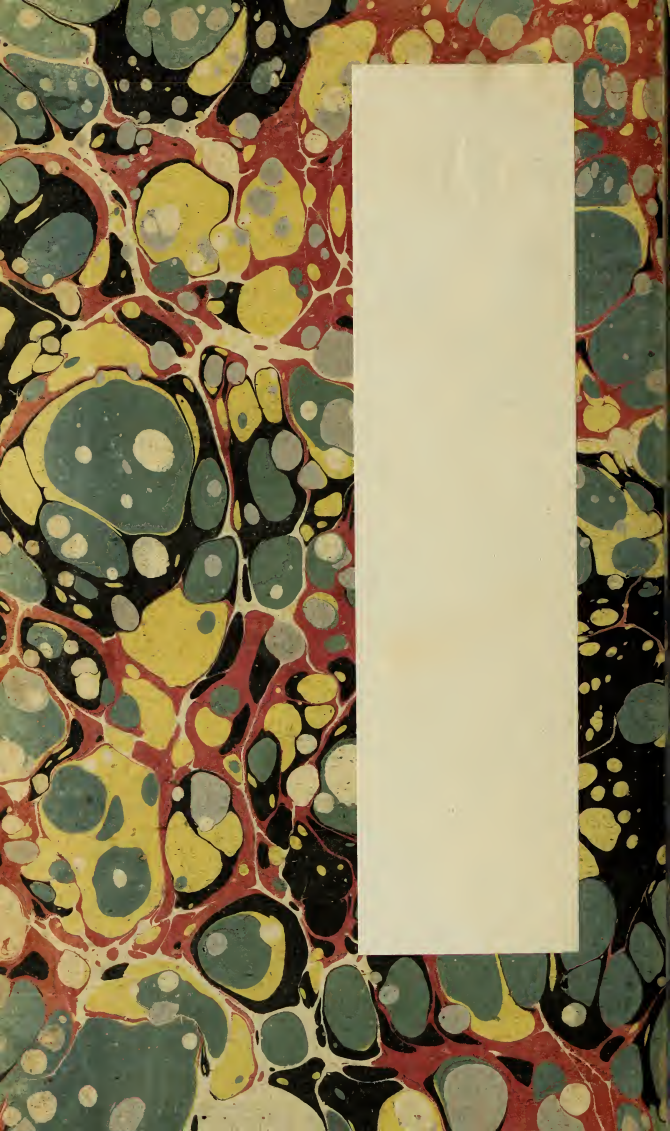
How were it possible not to waver, in a country where I have been told that the greatest service I could at present do, to my husband, would be to burn all that remains of his works, and to set fire to some pictures which he had brought hither with him ? as if the more things we burn in this world, the less should we burn ourselves in the next. Reading of your divine letters, fire, has restored me to reason, and to an exact performance of my duty to your majesty and my husband. My grief had deprived me of that of which he was not robbed by the presence of death. The two last bons mots which he uttered, even when his mind was unhinged, prove how firm he was in his opinions. He had formed the plan of a work which was not inferior to the strongest things he had said ; on this he was occupied, at least in fancy, during the whole course of his sickness. But fate rendered his projects ineffectual. He is too happy if, being dead, the exact truth should prove to your majesty he was not unworthy of the bounties with which he has been honoured by you.

I am with most profound respect, &c.

*End of the Correspondence between FREDERIC II. and the
MARQUIS D'ARGENS, and of Volume the Tenth.*







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